

AN: New Readers- the first couple of chapters are just to get Harry to school, I didn't really put any effort into them. The good stuff starts day 1 part 1.

Harry Potter was going to turn 73 this summer. Since he defeated Voldemort and saved the world from his menace, Harry went on to become an Auror. 55 years later he was the head of the Auror Department. It was in this capacity that he found himself down in the Department of Mysteries this June day.

Late in the day as the employees were leaving someone knocked over the giant time turner in the time room. No cause of the fall was found and the body was sifting too rapidly for any sort of identification to be made. Harry finally decided that there was nothing more that could be done until the body was identified. His Aurors had already left and Harry was finishing up on the scene.

Calling it a night he stood up and started leaving, whomever hit him with the curse was very powerful because they did it silently, or Harry tripped. Either way Harry fell into the cabinet that held all of the regular time turners setting several off dragging Harry several hours back through time. He had just enough time to get a grasp on his situation and think 'Well there goes my day.' before the giant time turner crushed him to death.

"AAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!" Harry Potter screamed quite clearly waking up all of the residents of Privet Drive. The lights at number 4 were on in moments and Petunia Dursley was looking out a window for the source of the noise when she saw the basket on the stoop. Harry Potter, The Chosen One, The Hero of the Second War, The head of the Aurors was once again a toddler.

Harry found that along with his normal infant's magical core he also had his adult core and no idea how. His core incidentally allowed him to make use of several of the wandless skills he had learned as an adult, namely occlumency, legilemency, apparition and Weasley Warping.

Sadly one of the Weasley clan had gone insane with efficiency in Harry's 50's. The Dark Weasley only reigned for about a week before attempting to Weasley Warp into a Gringott's vault. The Weasley Warp was the only lasting legacy of that era, it was soundless and didn't make you feel like you were being extruded out

of a noodle machine. It became a wildly popular form of transportation after The Dark Weasley was destroyed. When Harry got crushed no one used apparition anymore, now no one has ever even seen anyone warp.

There was only one place currently that had wards that could stop Harry. He was on the team that responded when Gringott's alerted them of the breach. It took over a week to get all of the Weasley off the wall. Needless to say that Harry wasn't going to be warping to Gringott's ever.

Harry discovered why a person's magic gets stronger as they get older, a majority of it is used to help the witch or wizard grow and stay magical. With twice as much magic to start and the focus of a disciplined mind Harry's magic turned his body into something not quite human. The first time he noticed something was different his body was about four years old. He had been idly scratching in the dirt continuing his debate on how much of the timeline he should preserve when he suddenly discovered that he was scratching up way more dirt than he should have and that the source was the inch long claw that was where his fingernail should have been on his index finger. Fortunately he found that it was retractable, and that he had nine more.

The second discovery was more of a sudden realization when it occurred to Harry that this was the time where he had gotten glasses in his first life. Soon after that he noticed the shimmer of the wards on the property, his eyes seemed to be taking a liking to magic and now provided mage sight.

He was wondering if he would still have accidental magic since he was trained, but that seemed to stem from his juvenile magic rather than a lack of control. Then one day he fell out of the tree in the back yard and his magic caught him before he hit the ground. He was almost surprised enough to let the magic stop since it had saved him from injury, instead though he held on to the sensation of broomless flying. By the time he was six he was flying around his room at will and during his eighth year he stopped walking around in private preferring to float just slightly off the ground.

Harry did his best to hide his magic from his Aunt and Uncle knowing how they felt about it. Flying almost constantly for a year had a dramatic effect in his physique though because on his ninth

birthday he came down to breakfast glowing. His Uncle made him stay inside until he had the glow taken care of. Before Harry could take care of it though his skin turned a light tan, almost golden but different enough that no one could call it gold. By the time he had gone blonde and lost the irises and pupils from his eyes he realised that he had turned gained the metamorphmagus ability somewhere along the way. The day after his epiphany he was back outside looking like a normal kid again.

That fall when he was walking home he cut down a road with some construction happening. Harry never got a full understanding of how this happened but somehow during that walk he was struck in the head by a falling dumpster. It reminded him of the giant time turner, in that it should have killed him but just did something unexpected instead. Harry didn't have a scratch on him, getting hit in the face with a giant industrial trash can did nothing. When the workers ran over he said that the dumpster narrowly missed him.

He got beaten less in this life, he supposed that that was just because he already knew what questions not to ask. The improvements to his body made him harder to hurt and after the dumpster incident Harry stopped caring about what they did. Just before Harry's Hogwart's letter came his aunt decided that not even a cast iron skillet to the face would hurt Harry, the beatings stopped.

At long last his Hogwart's letter came to no one's surprise. Dumbledore however was very surprised when that particular owl came back with a request for the key to his vault. He was sitting in his office trying to figure out how Harry knew about his vault. His Aunt and Uncle never knew about the vault and even if they did the hate charms should have kept Harry in the dark. At least this is easy enough to figure out, I'll just take him for his first visit to Diagon Alley.

Dumbledore stood up smugly and removed the key from a small drawer in his desk. Soon he was beyond Hogwart's wards and he promptly apparated to Privet Drive.

Dumbledore walked down the sidewalk and assumed his 'grandfather' face as he approached number four. He noticed that there were two boys weeding the flower bed. The one with messy black hair has to be Harry, the other must be his cousin. I wonder why he is doing manual labor, the charms should have made the Dursleys make Harry do it all. Maybe he is being punished.

"Excuse me, could one of you tell me where I could find Harry Potter?" Dumbledore asked from the sidewalk.

Both boys turned around quickly in surprise, but only the black haired boy spoke up. "I'll go get him for you professor."

Before Albus had even noticed that the boy knew who he was Albus found himself alone with the brown haired boy. "Was that Harry's cousin? Duncan, I think."

"No, I'm Harry's cousin, Dudley by the way." Dudley replied calmly and not looking Albus in the eye. Harry and he had planned this out and it sounded like a fun joke. Dudley stopped hitting Harry first, now they conspired together occasionally, but neither one would say they cared for the other.

"So who was that other boy?"

"Oh, he is my friend Piers." Dudley said as a third boy with sandy brown hair and blue eyes came outside.

"Did you bring my key Professor?" The new boy asked as he walked up to the sidewalk.

"Harry?" Albus asked surprised by the boy's appearance

"Erm, yeah. So my key?" Harry said impatiently.

"Ah, yes well after I have a word with your Aunt we can head over to Diagon Alley and get all of your supplies." Dumbledore said smiling, eyes twinkling.

"Oh that's okay, I really only need my key." Harry said holding out his hand.

"After I speak with your Aunt." I should be able to convince her that she shouldn't go and let me take Harry instead, it should be easy. He took several steps towards the door only to find himself still on the sidewalk. Well that's strange.

"If you make me ask for my key one more time I will press charges, with the goblins, please just give me my key and leave, everything is arranged." Harry said.

Albus didn't know how Harry knew goblin laws but he did know that Harry wasn't making empty threats. What happened here? My work was so tidy. With a sigh he pulled Harry's key out of his pocket and handed it over. Harry promptly turned around and walked back inside, Dudley following close behind. Albus thought he was right behind Dudley but then looked again and was still on the sidewalk. Why can't I move onto the property?

"Excuse me? Boys?" When the children didn't respond he stalked off and apparated back to Hogwart's to try to figure out what happened over the last few years to get this response. It simply didn't make any sense. Who put up those wards? I wonder how long it will take me to take them down.

Harry waited for his birthday before he went to Diagon Alley. His first stop, after an uneventful visit to Gringott's, was Ollivander's.

"Ah, Mr. Potter, I was wondering when you would be in here. Happy birthday by the way." Ollivander was smiling genially. Harry wasn't surprised that he saw through Harry's disguise immediately.

"Nice to see you Mr. Ollivander. How are your children?" Harry asked kindly.

"Oh, they are very good. They always get excited during the summer hoping that they will get matched up with their witch or wizard." Ollivander said smiling. He pulled a wand box out from under his desk. "This one has been particularly excited this morning, care to try it out?"

Harry opened the box to find his wand lying there. He took it in his hand and felt as though he were seeing a close friend for the first time in several decades. "I'll take it."

"Curious, very curious. The pheonix that gave the tail feather for that wand gave one more. The brother of your wand is the one that gave you your scar." Ollivander said, Harry's hand quickly went to his forehead to check and make sure that he still had the scar hidden by his metamorphmagus talent.

"Erm, how did you know about the scar?" Harry asked.

"I lost both of my eyes when I was young and had them replaced with magical prosthetics. Over time I have manipulated the enchantments and now they see through almost any attempt at concealing one's identity." Ollivander said with a shrug. "It was an accident really."

"Well, accident or not I would really appreciate it if you would not tell anyone about my real form." Harry said.

"I have always kept the secrets of my customers, I didn't feel it was my place to tell others what I learned by mistake. The tan looks good though, you're positively radiant." He finished with a wink and Harry laughed. "May I ask what happened?"

"I don't want to go into details but I found myself aware of my magic at a very young age and used it, the results are in front of you." Harry said.

The two of them chatted for a while before Harry left having bought his wand, two wand holsters (Ollivander raised an eyebrow in question when Harry asked for the second one but didn't say anything.), and a wand servicing kit.

Harry quickly got his trunk next, he got one that shrank with a wand tap and was warded to prevent anyone other than him from opening it. There were two like that, one was plain wood and brass but he got the more expensive version that was covered in black dragon hide and had a silvery metal to fasten it. The shop owner called it mythril but Harry suspected that that was just another name for titanium.

The rest of his supplies were found and purchased quickly and soon he found himself only needing to get his robes fitted and find Hedwig. The shop owners always offered to shrink his purchases for him and were always surprised when he pulled out his trunk and expanded it. It was fun but a little concerning that no one thought he would have that kind of trunk. He was still mentally shrugging as he entered Madam Malkins. Draco was there just like last time.

Harry ordered that standard Hogwart's robes and hopped up on the stool next to Draco with a nod to acknowledge his presence. Harry didn't remember what he did the first time to get Draco starting but nodding had the same results it seemed.

"Hello, Hogwart's too?" Draco asked.

"Yup," Harry said trying to sound as uninterested as possible, it didn't work.

"Me too, what house do you think you'll be in?" Draco asked

"Dunno"

"Well no one really knows until they're sorted. I'm going to go into Slytherin of course though, my whole family has, it's the best house after all." Draco said

"Doubt it." Harry replied.

"It is the best, everyone says so." Draco said with a glare.

"Except anyone from any other house, snakes lose 3 to 1." Harry said blandly.

"Only the opinions of Slytherins matter, who cares what gryffindorks and puffs think. Claws have good thoughts but aren't good for anything other than help on homework." Draco was amazingly condescending even at this age.

"You're too dumb to make it in Slytherin." Harry said without looking over. "You won't make it past the first plot against you."

"WHAT? HOW DARE YOU INSULT A MALFOY!" Draco screamed.
"WHEN MY FATHER GETS BACK HE'LL-"

"Be vary upset that you're using him as a threat to your peers." Lucius said as he walked in quickly. "And if you ever yell that loudly in public again there will be consequences."

"Sorry Father." Draco said turning red.

"You probably shouldn't threaten people without finding out who they are first either." Harry added helpfully, Lucius sent a whithering glare at Draco again.

"I apologize for Draco, he might be too stupid for Slytherin like you said. I am Lucius Malfoy, Head of the Malfoy family." Lucius said extending his hand to Harry.

"It is nice to meet you Lucius, I don't hold you at fault for your son's indiscretion. He is only eleven after all, I'm sure I'll make some mistakes too before I am done." Harry shook Lucius' hand with a smile. "I am afraid though that I would like to maintain my anonymity until September though. If I see you on the platform I'll give you my name then otherwise I'm sure your son would be delighted to inform you after the sorting."

"I can respect that." Lucius said.

The next few minutes passed in silence, Draco was too embarrassed to talk, Lucius had nothing to talk to an eleven year old about without establishing an identity, which he decided to avoid, and Harry simply didn't want to talk to the Death Eater and Future Death Eater. Soon though Draco was done and the Malfoys were leaving with his new robes.

"So how important are you?" One of the assistants asked.

Harry smiled at her. "Promise not to tell anyone until September second and I'll tell you."

"I, Constance Smith, swear on my magic that I will not willingly reveal the identity of this boy to anyone until after he has been sorted." She said holding up her wand and a pulse of magic verified her oath.

"Well you didn't have to go that far, but I appreciate it. My name is Harry Potter." He said calmly.

"Oh..." Her eyes jumped to look at his forehead. "No scar?"

"Dissappeared after a few years." Harry said.

"Oh, wow, little Malfoy is going to be in so much trouble when Lucius finds out." Constance said.

"Yeah, that's why I didn't tell him." Harry laughed.

The last few minutes of his fitting went by quickly with casual small talk between himself and Constance. Soon though he was done and put his robes in his trunk with everything else.

After a quick stop to get Hedwig he left the alley and warped home. Now that he had a wand he could take the trace off of himself. He did so immediately.

In August he didn't do very much. He made one more trip to Diagon Alley after making himself like a 40 year old woman. On this trip he bought a pensieve and then went down Knockturn Alley and stopped at a snake store. He bought a chameleon snake, a magical variety that could match the pattern and coloration of whatever she was on, she was never invisible but it was close enough to be easily overlooked. Harry named her Hande, and informed her that she would be acting as Harry's spy during school, she seemed pleased.

August 31st came around and while all of the other magical children were trying to sleep before Hogwart's Harry was busy disillusioning himself. Once he was invisible he warped into Dumbledore's office, after seeing that Dumbledore was gone he walked over to The Sorting Hat and put it on.

Disclaimer: I don't own any of these places or peoples

August 31st came around and while all of the other magical children were trying to sleep before Hogwart's Harry was busy disillusioning himself. Once he was invisible he warped into Dumbledore's office, after seeing that Dumbledore was gone he walked over to The Sorting Hat and put it on.

"Hello, I'm not supposed to sort you until tomorrow, you'll have to wait like the rest." The Sorting Hat told him.

"About that Hat, if you take a sneak peek you'll understand. I would however like to interfere with where you put a few other people." Harry said.

"Tell me why and I might think about it."

"Well the first is Hermione Granger. She is a muggle born and last time she got sorted into Gryffindor because that's where Dumbledore was sorted. She belongs in Ravenclaw, don't let her make the same mistake again." Harry said.

"Well that sounds reasonable enough, I'll decide when I look in her head tomorrow." Hat replied. "Anyone else?"

"Well, yes but they are less justified. I think Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle should go to Hufflepuff but I won't pressure you on that one." Harry said.

"If Crabbe and Goyle are a toss up between Hufflepuff and something else I will take this into consideration." Hat said

"The last one will be against his wishes entirely." Harry said "I don't know if you will be willing."

"I am not above bribes you know." Hat said with a mental smile.

"I don't know, what do you give a hat?" Harry asked.

"Well it would be great if you could unify the school." Hat said hopefully.

"I don't know how possible that is but I will agree to try." Harry said.

"I guess that's the best I can hope for." Hat said "I'll do it for you on faith. Don't let me down."

After telling the hat where to sort the last person Harry left and slept for a few hours before heading to the station.

Harry didn't sleep much that night as it turned out. That was fine with him though since he knew that he wasn't going to need to be awake for anything that day. When he woke up he double checked that he had everything in his trunk. Hande decided that the shrinking process was very uncomfortable and wanted to ride with Harry. They compromised and Harry expanded a pocket of his book bag and told her she could ride in there if she didn't move or try to talk at all. Harry sent Hedwig ahead and left her cage in his room. Ten minutes before the train was due to leave he tucked his shrunken trunk into his bag, disillusioned himself and warped onto the platform. When no one was looking he became visible again and made his way through the crowd.

He sat in the last compartment just like last time and sure enough just before the train left Ron, with dirt on his nose, opened the door.
"All the other compartments are full, can I sit here?"

"Sure." Harry said with a smile and help store Ron's trunk.

"I'm Ron Weasley." Ron said looking around for a moment. "Where is your trunk?"

"It is in my book bag, it shrinks." Harry said. "It is nice to meet you, you can call me James for now."

"What do you mean 'for now'?" Ron asked.

"That isn't my real name but I am trying to avoid letting Malfoy figure out what my name really is before the sorting." Harry said. "And the best way to keep a secret is to keep it to yourself."

"Why? Are you famous or something?" Ron asked.

"Or something. Please don't ask anymore, you'll know soon enough." Harry said.

"Fine, anything really to mess with a Malfoy." Ron said smiling. "Do you play wizards chess?"

"I do, but not on trains, too shaky, pieces go everywhere." Harry said. Just before Hermione opened the door.

"Excuse me but have either of you seen a toad?" Hermione asked and dragged Neville into view. "Neville lost his."

"No, but I'll help you look." Harry said enthusiastically and stood up to follow her out.

"I'll stay here, James, so no one takes our compartment." Ron said.

"Er, thanks Ron." Harry replied and Hermione led him out into the hall.

"I'm Hermione Granger, this is Neville Longbottom, who are you?" Hermione asked thrusting her hand forward.

"It is a pleasure to meet you Hermione and Neville." Harry said shaking their hands. "For various reasons I am using a pseudonym until the sorting, please call me James."

"Nice to meet you James." Hermione and Neville chorused. They got to the next door at that moment and Hermione threw it open "Excuse me, have any of you seen a toad? Neville lost his."

Fortunately Penelope Clearwater was sitting in this compartment and after confirming that Trevor wasn't in there she went with them.

"Pardon my interuption." Penelope said at the next door. "Accio...what's your toad's name Neville?"

"He's called Trevor." Neville said nervously.

"Accio Trevor" Penelope said. They finally found Trevor three compartments further down with the Weasley twins. Penelope then excused herself and went back to her compartment and joined her friends.

"If you two want you can join me and Ron in that compartment, just grab your stuff and head down, I'll be there momentarily." Harry said.

Hermione and Neville quickly accepted the invitation and went to get their things. Harry turned to the twins as soon as they were alone. "I hate to do this to you guys, but I think you have something that belongs to me."

"Why would you think that?" One of them asked, Harry decided to call him George.

"Because, I am the son of Prongs and I live up to what my parents would expect from a second generation marauder. I know lots of things." Harry said with a smug grin.

"You're the son of Prongs?" Fred asked

"Can we meet him?" George asked a moment later.

"Do you know-"

"Who the others are too?"

"Of course I do, you cannot meet my Prongs though." Harry said sadly.

"Can we meet-"

"The other three though?"

"Well there is a good chance that you will be meeting Moony soon, you already know Wormtail as to Padfoot, he is going to be out of contact for a while, I don't know how he'll feel when he is back though, I'll be sure to ask when I see him." Harry said with a grin.

"We know Wormtail?"

"You aren't going-"

"To tell us who he is-"

"Are you?"

"No, Sorry." Harry said. "I'm sure you'll be able to figure it out eventually though, good luck. But anyway I came here to get my map, so could you hand it over?"

The twin Harry was calling Fred pulled the map out of his pocket and handed it over. Harry pulled out his wand and tapped it. "I solemnly swear I am up to no good."

Harry had to glare at Fred when nothing happened, he handed over a second piece of parchment and took the fake map back. This time when Harry said the pass code it worked.

"Sorry, figured if you weren't who you said you were you wouldn't be able to work it." Fred said with a shrug.

"It's okay," Harry replied "I would have done the same to you."

Harry wiped the map and stuck it in his pocket. He started to leave but turned back when he got to the door. "I hope that we will be able to work together in the future."

"Us too." The twins chorused before Harry closed the door behind him.

Harry returned to his compartment as Neville and Ron were just finishing putting Neville's trunk in place. Harry closed the door behind him and sat down next to Hermione, smiling at her.

"What took you so long James?" Ron asked.

"Had to stop to talk to someone." Harry replied.

"Oh, who?" Ron asked.

"Someone." Harry replied.

"That's not very helpful." Ron said.

"I don't think it was meant to be Ron." Neville said.

"Nope." Harry said.

"So, who was it?" Ron said again.

"If I didn't tell you the first time why would I tell you just because you asked again?" Harry said bewildered.

"He clearly considers it to be none of our business who he talked to or what they talked about." Hermione said "And honestly we have no right to that information."

"Correct." Harry said. "We just met after all."

"Sorry James." Ron muttered barely loud enough to be heard.

"Hey Neville, you grew up in the magical world right?" Hermione asked, successfully changing the subject.

"Yea, so did Ron. James?" Neville replied.

"I was raised by muggles but I have some experience with the magical world. What's up Hermione?"

"Oh, I was just wondering if I could get more information on Harry Potter. I believe he is eleven now and should be attending Hogwarts with us." Hermione said.

"Yea, his birthday is the day after mine, so he should be coming." Neville said.

"Yeah right. Why would Harry Potter come here? He has the money and fame to get any tutors he wants, he could learn magic better from home than any of us will at school." Ron said.

"Not to mention that after that night no one knows where he went." Neville added. "Who knows, wanna go try to find him?"

"Don't you think we would have heard about it if someone found Harry Potter on this train?" Harry asked using all of his mental discipline to keep from laughing. "No one could have kept it a secret."

"Yeah he probably went to Hogwarts some other way if he is attending at all. I guess we should just wait and see." Hermione said.

The door slid open again to reveal Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle. Malfoy spoke up with a sneer. "There you are, I guess you aren't as important as I thought if you are hanging out with Longbottom and a Weasley."

"Hello Draco, might as well make introductions. Ron, Neville, Hermione, this is Draco Malfoy and his brainless body guards Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle. Draco, Crabbe, Goyle, this is Ron Weasley, Neville Longbottom and Hermione Granger." Harry said pointing to each person as he named them.

"How do you know Crabbe and Goyle?" Draco demanded.

"Important people learn details, I'm sure you wouldn't understand Draco." Harry said smugly.

"Whatever, Granger? I don't know that name. Are you a mudblood" Draco sneered.

Harry stood quickly and threw a punch quickly breaking Malfoy's nose. "Don't use that word anywhere within my hearing or I will make it so you can never say it again."

"JAMES! What did you do that for?" Hermione shrieked.

"You'll pay for this!" Draco shouted slightly garbled and stalked away with his goons.

"Sorry, the M word in the magical community is like the N word in America. It is racist and vulgar." Harry said.

"Some members of the magical community value themselves on 'Blood Status'" Neville said.

"If you were born of muggle stock they consider your blood dirty" Harry said.

"It's really foul. Bloody git." Ron added.

"Ron!" Hermione admonished. "You know in America the black population turned the N word into their own thing, they claim ownership even. We could do the same."

"What do you mean?" Ron asked.

"Well, simply put those of us from muggle families could all agree and decide that that word wouldn't be offensive if used by us for us to us." Hermione explained. "What is the PC term anyway?"

"Muggleborn" Neville said. "if both of your parents are muggles. Half-blood if either of your parents or any of your great grandparents are muggles."

"So two muggleborns would give birth to a half-blood, and two half bloods can potentially birth a full-blood?" Hermione clarified.

"Yes, eventually. They call themselves 'pure-blood' though." Harry said. "I am half-blood myself, these two are pure-blood for several generations."

"So that term applies to you as well?" Hermione asked Harry.

"Yea, I don't think your idea will catch on though." Harry replied.

"You're probably right. It is hard to start these kinds of things on purpose." Hermione admitted.

The rest of the trip was quiet, the four of them chatted or read, Ron and Neville tried to play chess once and almost lost a rook under a seat. Soon enough though the bell chimed through the train indicating that they would be arriving within a few minutes. Hermione stood outside the door while the boys got changed into their robes and then switched and put hers on as well. Harry left his trunk enlarged and put his backpack in it so it would go up to his dorm automatically like everyone else's. The other three were properly impressed with it.

They were all done and sitting back in the compartment waiting out the final stretch when Harry noticed Wormtail, he had come out of Ron's trunk while everyone was changing.

"What's wrong James?" Hermione asked then followed Harry's stare and screamed.

"What?" Ron said dumbly looking around. "Oi, Scabbers! I told you to stay in the trunk."

By the time the train stopped Scabbers and Trevor were both lock securely in their trunks and a voice spoke through the entire train. "Please leave your belongings here, they will be taken up to your dorms."

The four of them filed out and Harry started walking towards Hagrid. The other three followed him just before they heard Hagrid bellow is traditional "Firs' years over 'ere!"

The four of them shared a boat, Ron and Neville on one side and Harry with Hermione on the other. "How do you think we get sorted?" Neville asked.

"The twins told me that we have to wrestle a troll." Ron said grimly.

"Maybe it is a test, do you think we will have to cast anything?" Hermione asked anxiously.

"It isn't either of those things." Harry said as he watched the castle approach. "This is a really impressive view."

"Yeah, and how do you know it isn't either of those things?" Hermione asked slightly offended that her suggestion was brushed off so easily.

"Well, trolls are too dangerous to expect an untrained eleven year old to be able to handle. As for the test, well a percentage of the population only just found out about magic. It would be like taking a group of pure-bloods to a muggle school and giving them a test to place them in a computer class." Harry said.

"What's a kompootre?" Ron asked. "I bet dad has one in his shed..."

"See?" Harry asked turning to Hermione.

"The board of governors is almost exclusively pure-blood though James. They could do something like this to discriminate against muggleborns." Neville said.

"Good point. I guess it really just depends on whether we eat first or second then. If everyone's dinner is waiting on the sorting it will have to be a pretty quick process." Harry said as the boat bumped into

the dock. "And why are you supporting the test theory? Do you want it to be a test?"

"NO!" Neville shouted "It's just that we should be prepared for it if it is."

"Don't you think it is a little too late to start preparing for a test?" Harry asked.

"That's why I've already memorized all of our school books." Hermione said smugly. Harry laughed when Ron's jaw dropped. It was nice to see that his mouth could open that far without food being involved.

"That may have been more than you needed Hermione." Neville said. "You might not want to advertise that."

"She is definitely going to be a claw." Ron said.

"Claw? Oh, Ravenclaw. I am really hoping to be in Gryffindor, that's where Dumbledore was sorted you know." Hermione said.

"Why do you want to be in Gryffindor?" Harry asked.

"I just told you, that's where Dumbledore was sorted." Hermione said.

"Is that the only reason?" Harry asked.

"Well, yes. The headmaster came from that house though, there has to be a reason why." Hermione said.

"If you look at the statistics though less than a quarter of the Hogwart's headmasters have been Gryffindors. Most of them are from Ravenclaw and Slytherin. There have even been more Hufflepuff headmasters than Gryffindors." Harry said.

"But they say that Dumbledore is the strongest wizard alive." Hermione said.

"Even if that is true, are you Dumbledore?" Harry asked. "No, so what does it matter to your life how strong he is, you won't necessarily match him, or you might beat him, either way that is already part of you, none of the houses come with a power boost."

"Hrmpf!" Hermione said and turned away from Harry crossing her arms. He shrugged and followed after Hagrid, who was starting to show them the way to the entrance hall. Neville and Ron followed immediately, Hermione hesitated for a moment but decided that staying with the three people she knew was better than trying to meet more new people, even if one of them had proved her wrong.

The great hall erupted into applause as The Sorting Hat finished his song. Hermione had blushed slightly when she realized that the hat did the sorting and there was no test. Professor McGonagall called out the first name "Abbott, Hannah"

A little girl walked nervously up to the stool and climbed on sliding the hat down around her ears. Ron let out a groan and said "Aw, their using last names and going alphabetically. I'm going to be standing here all night."

"You're not last though." Harry said, pointing down the line to a disappointed looking Italian boy. "That is Blaise Zabini. He's last."

"HUFFLEPUFF" One of the tables started cheering loudly.

"Bones, Susan"

"I am so glad my name is in the G's" Hermione said.

"HUFFLEPUFF" More cheers.

"Boot, Terry"

"It gives me enough time to understand what to expect but not so much time that I get bored of waiting." She finished.

Crabbe getting sorted into Hufflepuff got more whispers than applause. When Goyle followed him people were clearly laughing.

"Granger, Hermione"

"Wish me luck." Hermione said as she walked up confidently and put that hat on. She only had it on for a second before it shouted "RAVENCLAW"

Neville got sorted into Gryffindor again and soon McGonagall looked at the list and called out "Malfoy, Draco"

Draco walked up with his normal condescending swagger and jammed the hat down around his head. Last time, Harry remembered, his sorting took an eyeblink, this time though Draco sat and sat. Even though only his mouth was showing you could tell that a moment after the hat went on he was surprised. That was slowly replaced with impatience, then indignation. After that he just started getting angrier and angrier, suddenly all of the blood rushed out of his head and he started sweating. Just when the collar of Draco's shirt was showing dampness the tear in the hat opened and Draco was sorted.

"GRYFFINDOR"

Only three sounds were heard in the great hall after that. The first was Harry laughing. The second was Snape's face hitting his hands and the third was the thud of Draco hitting the floor, he passed out and fell off the stool. McGonagall took that hat off Draco's head and quickly revived him and sent him on his way, to the gryffindor table. Where the Weasley twins immediately took the seats on either side of him with an evil grin, their friend Lee Jordan took the seat directly across from Draco, who looked worse than he did on the stool.

There were only ten students left to be sorted when McGonagall got to the one they were all waiting for.

"Potter, Harry"

Absolute silence. Then as one every person leaned towards the remaining unsorted. Harry was now at the end of the line furthest from that hat, Ron was right next to him looking down the line waiting to see which one was Harry, since he knew that the one was Zabini that left three choices for him. Ron was very surprised when James walked passed him and down the line toward the hat. He was even more surprised when James' features suddenly started changing to give him his customary unruly black hair and bright emerald eyes.

The Great Hall was much louder this time than last, possibly because he just told everyone that he is a metamorphmagus. Draco looked appalled by Harry's identity, Neville and Ron had identical

looks of shock and Hermione looked like she had a thousand questions to ask. He smiled to Hermione and sat down on the stool and slid the hat on.

Did he faint? Hat asked.

Yea, it was funny. Thanks a lot for that Harry thought I'll gladly do my best to hold up my end of the arrangement. Could you put me in Ravenclaw please? I think it will be the easiest way to explain away my knowledge.

Sounds good Hat replied Dumbledore is trying really hard to convince me to put you in Gryffindor. Too bad I don't work for him. "RAVENCLAW"

Harry jumped up with a smile and set the hat back on the stool and walked down Ravenclaw table to join Hermione. A seventh year stopped him along the way and introduced herself "Hi Harry, Welcome to Ravenclaw, I'm Lisa Turpin, the seventh year prefect."

"It's nice to meet you Lisa." Harry said shaking her hand quickly before moving on. He took the seat next to Hermione before it hit him. Lisa Turnpin was in our year last time. Something is up.

"Why didn't you tell us you were Harry Potter? I have read all about you. How did you change your appearance like that?" Hermione started her barrage.

Harry smiled and leaned close, whispering in her ear he said "Nitwit Blubber Oddment Tweek"

"What does that mean?" Hermione asked but Harry was scanning down the remaining line of unsorted.

"Who is it, who is it?" Harry muttered to himself before finding the unfamiliar face. "Who is she?"

"Who is who?" Hermione asked.

"Her, second girl from the hat." Harry said.

"Why does she matter?" Hermione asked.

"Hermione," Harry said turning towards her. "I will tell you everything I trust you with but not on command. That girl matters for reasons that I don't trust you with yet."

Harry did trust her with the information, but not until he figured out what was going on and got her in private. A different person here might mean it is a different universe than mine and I traveled to it rather than back in time...

"You don't trust me?" Hermione said sounding hurt.

"I just met you, do you trust me with all of your secrets?" Harry replied.

"How can I trust you, you lied about who you were." Hermione responded.

"I did no such thing, I told you right up front that I was using a fake name, it isn't even fake, it is my middle name. Plenty of people go by their middle names, and I never told you any last name." Harry said.

"Tonks, Nymphadora" McGonagall called out, Harry's head shot up as he watched the girl he didn't recognize walk up to the hat.

"No, way." Harry said jaw dropping.

"RAVENCLAW"

Disclaimer: I don't own any of these places or peoples.

"Tonks, Nymphadora" McGonagall called out, Harry's head shot up as he watched the girl he didn't recognize walk up to the hat.

"No, way." Harry said jaw dropping.

"RAVENCLAW"

"That's great!" Harry said.

"Why is that great?" Hermione asked.

"You'll see as soon as she gets here, I bet it is the first thing she talks about." Harry said smiling.

Within moments Nymphadora Tonks sat down next to Harry on the other side from Hermione. She had barely sat down when she spoke up "Wotcher, Was that a glamour or something else?"

"Hello, Nymphadora was it? That's kinda clunky, can I call you something else?" Harry asked smiling. "And no it wasn't a glamour."

"Yea, Don't call me that. I like Tonks." Tonks said "If it wasn't a glamour does that mean you're a metamorphmagus too?"

"It doesn't mean that no, but it happens to be the truth in this instance. I could have done it with amazingly timed polyjuice too." Harry said and turned his skin lime green. Tonks laughed and matched his skin tone. They stayed like that for the rest of the meal.

"What is a metamorphmagus?" Hermione asked.

"Natural shapeshifters, they're rare, this is probably the first time that two have been here at once let alone in the same year and house." An older Ravenclaw told her. "They always have to have a humanish shape though, unlike animagi, who turn into a specific animal."

"Ten galleons says I'm better at transfiguration than you!" Tonks said to Harry.

"You're on." Harry replied and shook her hand, before turning to Hermione again. "See why this is great?"

"You think I'm great?" Tonks asked faking bashfulness "I think you're great too."

Everyone that was close enough to hear laughed.

"Weasley, Ronald"

"GRYFFINDOR"

I wonder how he and Draco are going to get along.

"Zabini, Blaise"

"SLYTHERIN"

As Blaise was sitting down at Slytherin Professor McGonagall cleared away the stool and hat while Dumbledore stood up. "Welcome! Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak! Thank you!"

Hermione immediately swung to ask Harry how he knew what Dumbledore was going to say but found him grinning at the food and shoveling some onto his plate. When he noticed her staring at him he started loading her plate too. "Hermione, you still have to eat even when there are big thoughts in your head."

Blushing she looked down at her plate, and then at the rest of the food on the table, and then at what Harry had picked for himself. Their plates were different but Hermione had exactly what she would have picked for herself. He was the only person who seemed to know what was going on when Malfoy was sorted and he wasn't surprised by it. Note to self find out why Malfoy's sorting was such a surprise. He also refuted every wrong guess at the sorting without supplying a theory himself, did he know? He would have told us if he knew though, wouldn't he? He knew what Dumbledore was going to say, he even told me that I had no reason to want to go to Gryffindor. How much does this boy know? And how?

"Was anyone told how we were to be sorted before it happened?" Hermione asked to no one in particular.

"It is a tradition that you don't know." Tonks said "And if they do know they're not supposed to tell anyone else."

"Oh, Harry, none of the books I read said anything about what happened to you after that night." Hermione said. Well at least that explains why he didn't tell us about the hat.

"They wouldn't, I was sent to my muggle relatives and kept out of the magical world until now." Harry said with a shrug.

"So how do you know so much about who is here? You pointed out Blaise, you didn't need an introduction for Draco or his friends, and you knew that Nymphadora was a metamorphmagus before she sat down." Hermione challenged.

"Don't call me that!" Tonks shouted.

"I haven't wasted all of the time I have had since I learned about this world." Harry replied. "Anyway, Eat."

"Speaking of which, how did you know what I wanted?" Hermione asked before taking her first bite. Harry just smiled at her then kept eating.

Hermione spent the rest of the main meal time eating, thinking of question, starting to ask them, stopping herself and then going back to her food. Tonks spent her meal eating and changing her hair with the unspoken request for someone to stop her when it looked good with lime green. Harry sat looking from one girl to the other completely amused. When the food disappeared Harry immediately grabbed Hermione's plate and before she could protest the desserts appeared and he served her some plum pudding.

"This is my favorite! Seriously how do you know this stuff? Have you been spying on me?" Hermione asked looking very concerned.

"No spying, I'm just that good." Harry said with a smirk serving himself some treacle tart. She was still frowning at him. Harry sighed and drew his wand, holding it up he said "I, Harry James Potter, swear on my life and magic that the first time that I so much as

heard of one Hermione Jane Granger was September 1st 1991, when we met on the train and she introduced herself."

The magic pulsed around him and he was looking at her like that should have made all the difference.

"What did you just do?" Hermione asked.

"He swore a wizard's oath." Tonks said before Harry could reply. "If he was lying he'd be dead right now, and a squib but that wouldn't really matter."

"Squib?" Hermione said.

"No magical born to a magical family." Harry said. "They are a product of pure blood inbreeding."

"Inbreeding?" Hermione said with dread.

"Yeah, almost every member of the old families are related." Harry said. "I believe Tonks here is my third cousin once removed, Neville's great great grandfather married one of my great aunts that makes us fourth or fifth cousins, I think, I never really learned the rules for that stuff."

"Really?" Hermione said.

"Yeah." Tonks said. "Old families don't really talk about it though, there is not stigma associated with it. They still haven't realized that those of us born with muggleborn parents are more fit in general. My mom said that Harry and I made quite a commotion when we were conceived."

"My mother was muggleborn and her father is muggleborn," Harry explained. "House of Black and House of Potter both looked down on the unions. To them anything less than a pure-blood was an insult to the family."

"My mom was disowned when she married my dad." Tonks said solemnly. "We sure showed them though. We're both the first halvsies in each family and we both have a rare magical talent. I haven't found any other metamorphmagi in my lineage, I don't know

about the Potter side of Harry but he certainly doesn't get it from his Black genes."

Tonks then tried to take a bite of her dessert and found out the embarrassing way that dessert had ended while she was talking. The plates were all clear again and Dumbledore once again took to podium. "A few quick words before bed, Firstly the Forbidden Forest is still forbidden, other wise we would call it something else. The list of banned products can be found on Mr. Filch's door, please check and follow it. Finally the third floor corridor on the east side is off limits for all who don't wish to die a gruesome death. Thank you, Good night."

"What does he mean 'gruesome death'?" Hermione asked concerned.

"He means that if you go down that hall you'll be eaten by a grue." Harry replied, drawing a laugh from Hermione. "Seriously though I would expect that he means exactly what he said. It is more important to know that you will die than it is to know how you'll die."

The Ravenclaws unanimously waited until the other three houses cleared out and the doors were easy to get through, there was of course no sense in getting up just to stand around waiting. Lisa Turpin stood up and called to everyone to follow her. She led them up to Ravenclaw tower and informed them that they had a riddle as their password rather than a password. Solve the riddle, gain entrance. Fail to solve the riddle, wait until someone comes along who can answer it.

"Um, isn't that really insecure?" Hermione asked. "Anyone can solve a riddle."

"Yeah, it is." Lisa replied. "No matter how much we and Professor Flitwick beg Dumbledore won't let us change it. The man's gone senile if you ask me."

Hermione was shocked, Harry laughed at her expression. "Aren't you glad you didn't go into Gryffindor now?" She nodded without comment.

"Needless to say that our most important security measure is to simply not tell anyone where the tower is. I mean ANYONE!" Lisa

said. "There is a certain set of twins that I am sure want to find out how to get in here."

After all the Ravenclaws filed into the common room Lisa spoke up again "Could all the firsties stay here for a moment? You're supposed to get a speech from Professor Flitwick before you go to sleep. Everyone else, get out of here and go to bed, you know the drill."

When only the 12 first year claws and the prefects remained Penelope Clearwater stood up. "I am Penelope, feel free to call me Penny, I am in my fifth year thus this is my first year as a prefect."

As she was sitting down a boy stood up next to her. "I'm Jake Terner. I am also in my fifth year and a new prefect. There is a tradition in Ravenclaw. The first years are under the care of the fifth year prefects, the second years are under the sixth year prefects and the third years are under the seventh year prefects. Fourth year and above go to whomever when needed but generally by this age you won't need a prefect's help."

As the remaining Prefects stood and introduced themselves Professor Flitwick arrived and handed a stack of booklets to Penelope, who in turn handed half to Jake and the two of them quickly distributed them to the first years. When Lisa Turnpin had finished with her introduction Flitwick moved forward to speak.

"Ahem, I am Professor Filius Flitwick, I teach charms here, and I am your head of house. In that function I am the intermediary between you and the staff." Flitwick said. "Harry, your skin is still green. The booklets you have all been given are copies of the school rules, followed by Ravenclaw rules, followed by Ravenclaw traditions and finally at the end are useful everyday spells that will generally make life easier. On the wall over there you can see a basic map of Hogwarts with the class rooms and faculty offices highlighted and color coded, next to that are specific changes that Hogwarts makes, such as corridors that are dead ends every third Tuesday and things like that. Questions, then off to bed."

Hermione's hand shot into the air. Flitwick pointed to her. "When do we get our schedules? Are we allowed to use magic in the common room? What about in our dorms? Do we have to wear our uniforms all the time?"

"Tomorrow morning, yes, yes, only in class and at feasts." Flitwick replied. "Anything else Miss...?"

"Granger, and no sir." Hermione said blushing slightly.

"Anyone else?" When no one raised their hands "Alright, Go to bed then."

Flitwick turned and left while the prefects got the students going to the correct rooms. Where Gryffindor tower had all of the boys in an open round room with four post beds as the only source of privacy, here in Ravenclaw tower the beds were the same, draped in blue though, but each was supplied with a writing desk and they were all separated by walls. The room was still a circle and all of the cubicles opened into the center. Each cubicle had a name plate declaring it's occupant and their trunks were all already there. Harry pulled his backpack out of his trunk and threw it on his bed, then wished his dorm mates goodnight. After pulling his curtains closed he pulled out the Marauder's Map and checked to see where the Weasley twins were. He found that they were headed up the stairs to their room with Lee, Harry was very happy that there were only three third year Gryffindors this year and warped over to their room. They were getting close so Harry simply sat at the desk next to the door and waited. A few moments later the door flung open and one of the twins came in first.

"A Gryffindor Malfoy, who would have thought. Do you think we can convince Ron to prank him for us?" Twin A asked.

"Probably, but you could just ask me to do it for you." Harry said laughing as all three of them jumped and spun to look at him.

"How did you get in here?" Twin B asked.

"And why shouldn't we tell McGonagall?" Lee added.

"Well Lee, you shouldn't tell McGonagall because that would incite my hostilities. And I'll never tell Twin B." Harry said.

"Twin B! Haha I win." Said Twin A

"Not really Twin 2" Harry joked. "Anyway I'm only here because I'm visiting all of the houses tonight, thought I would be able to chat here elsewhere, I'll have to be quiet."

"Hey, you weren't surprised by Malfoy's sorting! Did you have something to do with that?" Lee asked.

"Sorry Twin A1, that's classified." Harry said with a grin. "Is there a way that I can contact the three of you without making a visit?"

"Not unless you're telepathic too." Twin B said "We'll think of something though, just give us a few days."

"Alright then, Good night." Harry said pleasantly and stood up and walked out the door. He warped back to his bed as soon as the door closed behind him.

The Weasleys couldn't allow an outsider to escape their territory that easily though and they ran to the door to make their token effort at retribution. They got to the door within a second of Harry closing it and threw it open to find no one. They looked at each other "Well, that was impressive."

They spent the rest of the night planning an invasion of Ravenclaw tower. At least now they knew why Harry took the map so soon, if they still had it they could have figured out how Harry got in here.

Once everyone was asleep, according to his map, Harry warped down to the Slytherin common room and with a wave of his wand painted a giant mongoose on the wall, he also released Hande to start her spying. Then he popped over to Hufflepuff central and threw a picture of a coyote up on their wall. In the Gryffindor common room he painted a hyena and he decided that painting a magpie in Ravenclaw would keep people from suspecting a claw of doing all this work. Harry was certain that in the morning the only people that would suspect him were Fred, George and Lee. He fell asleep with a smile.

Harry woke up when Tonks jumped on him, Hermione followed suit a second later. They were giggling as Harry was getting over the shock, it didn't take long to compose himself and tease them. "Well, waking up with two pretty ladies in my bed. Not a bad way to start

the day at all. Next time you two want to join me in bed, crawling under the covers will be more than adequate."

Hermione turned bright red and Tonks laughed "Right-o boss."

"Come on Harry get ready, breakfast is starting." Hermione said pulling on one of his arms.

"Yea, out of bed sleepy head." Tonks started pulling on the other. Harry sat up and let the blanket fall away from his torso. He only slept in pants and the girls stared at the exposed flesh, for an eleven year old he was very well muscled. Hermione sighed and Tonks just said "Wow."

"I can be pudgy if you prefer." Harry said as he stood up and pulled a shirt out of his trunk.

"No no, muscles are better." Tonks said as Hermione nodded. Harry shrugged and pulled the shirt on and quickly cast a teeth cleaning charm.

"Where did you learn that?" Hermione asked.

"I'm surprised at you, it is in the booklet that Professor Flitwick gave us." Harry said

"I'm reading it linearly" Hermione blushed a little "I'll look at the spells at breakfast."

"Right, Breakfast. Let's go." Harry said and walked out the door, when he got to the middle he noticed that all the curtains on the other five beds were open and the occupants had already left.

"Harry, you forgot something." Hermione said.

"Hmm, what?" Harry turned around and looked himself over. Shirt, pants, don't need glasses anymore, my skin isn't green, nor is it golden and glowy.

"You're not wearing shoes." Hermione said.

"So?"

"Oh, never mind then."

Tonks laughed and hooked her arm through Harry's right arm and motioned for Hermione to take his other one. Together they marched Harry out the door and down to the common room, ignoring the fact that he was backwards while they walked. They set him down once they got there and the three of them left the tower together.

"I wonder who drew that bird on the wall." Tonks said, Hermione and Harry just shrugged.

Harry saw that not only was he the last Ravenclaw to wake up, he was also the only one to leave the tower in his pajamas. Harry took his seat and the girls immediately took the seats to either side of him.

"What took you so long Potter?" Padma called

"Late night." Harry said and served himself some coffee. Terry Boot moved down to sit across from Harry.

"Hey, they guys and I just put it to a vote Harry, we don't think it is fair that you get a third of the Ravenclaw women to yourself." Terry said with a smirk.

"Hey, if you want to know why they're sitting with me you'll have to ask them." Harry said. "I didn't tell them they had to join me."

"Oh I see. So ladies what draws you to our young celebrity?"

"Well I have always been told that it is polite to share a meal with some one after you wind up in bed with them." Tonks said levelly.

"Wound up in bed." Terry choked out. "What about you Hermione?"

"Same reason." Tonks said before she could respond, so instead she turned bright red and buried her face in her hands.

"Late night indeed Potter." Anthony Goldstein called from a few seats down. "Starting a bit young aren't you?"

"You know, if I didn't have control of the function I would be blushing right now. Can we stop implying that I slept with these two please?" Harry said. "I'd like to eat before classes start."

"Are you saying you don't want to sleep with us Harry?" Tonks asked batting her eyelashes.

"There is no good way to answer that question Nym." Harry replied.

"Nym?" Tonks said pausing to consider. "No, I don't think so, stick with Tonks."

"If I don't." Harry asked innocently.

"Then I'll have to punish you." Tonks replied.

"Hey you two, Save it for Harry's bed." Anthony shouted drawing laughs from the whole table and looks from the rest of the Great Hall.

"What about Harry's bed?" Professor Flitwick asked as he walked up behind them.

"These two jumped on me this morning, while I was still in bed, seems to be a big source of entertainment for them now." Harry said, Hermione was blushing again and Tonks was giggling. "Do you know anything about that bird in the common room?"

"It is a magpie, they steal eggs from the nest of other birds, including eagles." Flitwick said and handed Harry a stack of papers. "Still don't know who put it there, but in the mean time since you seem so eager to get to know our students you three can pass out the schedules."

Harry took the first year stack and handed them out quickly without asking anyone for their names. After a moment of thought Hermione decided that she could have done the same and left it off the list of strange things about Harry Potter. Between the three of them they got the other six years handed out efficiently. Harry took his leave a little early because he still had to change and get his books, reminding everyone else that they still needed to get the proper books for their classes that day too and soon all twelve first years were herding up to the tower.

Tonks followed Harry up to the boys' room and surprisingly Hermione did too. Harry shrugged and pulled his pants down, followed quickly by the removal of his shirt. When he turned to dig his robes out of his trunk he saw that Tonks was blushing and Hermione had turned away. Once his head was through the head hole of his robes Harry turned towards them again "You can look now Hermione. Nice blush Tonks."

"Aren't you even a little body conscious?" Hermione asked turning back around as red as he thought she'd be.

"Nah, anything I don't like I can change. Metamorph remember?" Harry said smirking.

"We were planning on embarrassing you." Tonks said as she regained control of the capillaries in her face. "Just had to turn it around didn't you?"

"Always, come on lets get your books" Harry said as he put his transfiguration book in his bag to join the charms book. He followed the girls down to the common room and started to follow them up to the girl's rooms, but the stairs turned into a slide, just like in Gryffindor. "Well that's sexist."

Tonks and Hermione laughed and went up the stairs when they reformed, just as Jake was coming into the room. "The alarm went off on the girl's stairs. Who tried to go up?"

"Really there is an alarm too? I am going to have to deal with these trust issues." Harry said. "How do I lodge of formal complaint with the Board of Directors?"

"Trust issues?" Jake said. "You'll never get rid of their trust issues."

"What about just getting rid of the wards then?" Harry asked. "I'm sure there is someone in this tower who knows how."

"They're just there to keep boys out of the girls' rooms. What's so bad about that?" Jake asked.

"Well nothing, if they made the same effort to keep girls out of the boys' rooms. This morning I was woken up by Hermione and Tonks, not that I'm complaining, but what if I want to return the favor?"

Harry said. He focused his mage sight and saw that only the first six steps held the trigger. "Maybe I could just bypass it."

"No one really thinks about it much. How do you plan on bypassing it?" Jake said.

"I'd tell you but then I'd have to obliviate you." Harry said and sat down to wait. Alternate universe, checklist 1-Prophecy, 2-Horcruxes, 3-Hallows, 4-Sirius' innocence/guilt, 5-Wormtail. Hallows can wait for a while, let's see if I get the cloak at christmas. I can pop in and check the prophecy, and I can check the tiara, both as soon as I have some long term privacy, that should probably wait until christmas too. I can confirm Sirius' innocence and Wormtail's guilt tonight after Ron goes to sleep. What to do with that though, I could get Sirius out and innocent now but then if voldie comes back like last time I'll have less insight into his workings. Then again the tournament had to have been planned and scheduled before Wormtail escaped, you don't do something like that over the summer. That means that voldie didn't need Wormtail. Last time they panicked when I ran away from the Dursleys after Sirius escaped. If we waited and everything went the same way I could stay completely out of sight and not let Dumbledore get any word of where I am until I get back on the train perfectly healthy. That'd be funny but I can't let Sirius rot for another two years just to play a prank. So, Immediate plans: Break into first year Gryffindor dorms and check to see if Scabbers is Pettigrew.

The girls chose this moment to come back down the stairs and stopped Harry from planning any further. Harry led the way out of the portrait and was a few steps down the hall when Tonks ran the few steps between them and hooked her arm through his, Hermione followed a moment later on the other side. Harry was shocked with how different this Hermione was turning out than the one in his last life. He wondered if it was just because Tonks was with them rather than Ron, or if her life has been different. Her favorite foods were still the same though. Guess I just need to get to know Hermione all over again.

Their first class was charms with Slytherin. The snakes were already there when the three of them bounced in still linked together. Harry sat down next to Blaise Zabini and had to suppress his smirk when Hermione bumped Tonks out of the way and took the seat on the

other side of Harry. Harry also ignored the disappointed look on Tonks' face as she sat down, instead he turned to Blaise.

"Hello, I'm Harry Potter." He said offering his hand.

"Blaise Zabini." The Italian replied shaking Harry's hand. "I'm surprised that you're talking to me. I was working under the assumption that the hero of the light was brainwashed into thinking all snakes are dark."

"Nope, not all of you, just a loud minority." Harry said smiling. "Your assumption was almost correct though. So, are you part of the loud minority?"

"No." Zabini laughed. "There are less of them in our year than in most of the others, we all expected Malfoy and his goons to be here."

"Yeah, that was a surprise." Harry said. "These are my friends Hermione Granger and Tonks, but you should call her Nymphadora, she really likes it."

Tonks punched him in the shoulder while Hermione took Blaise's hand. Still glaring she took Blaise's hand herself as they leaned across the other two. "Please, don't call me that."

"No worries Tonks." Blaise said with a smile and released her hand. "This is Daphne Greengrass, she isn't very vocal either."

Another round of handshaking and 'nice to meet you's later Professor Flitwick arrived. Harry had noticed that Daphne held his hand significantly longer than either of the girls. He started wondering whether last time the girls were less obvious or if he had been more oblivious. Harry was the first one to successfully cast the charm to un-wilt a flower.

"Good job Mr. Potter. Ten points to Ravenclaw." Flitwick said smiling.

"No thank you sir." Harry replied and turned to Blaise who was staring at him jaw dropped. "Try it again, I'll see if I can see what you're doing wrong."

"What do you mean 'no thank you sir'?" Blaise said shocked.

"It's just that the house cup doesn't make any sense, and I'd rather not be a part of it." Harry replied with a shrug.

"Mr. Potter, we've used the point system at Hogwarts practically forever. Why does it suddenly not make sense?" Flitwick asked, by this point every student had fallen silent.

"Well, you offer points as a reward and take them as a punishment, but this only matters if the points have value." Harry started "So the house cup was established, probably when the whole school was unified and it was a friendly competition. That would also explain why the amounts given are so arbitrary. You could have given me one point for casting the spell or a thousand, or none at all, and still have been within the scope of the written rules. Over time the arbitrary nature and only having one use for the points turned the competition into an us versus them scenario. Everyone wants to win the trophy so that all of their hard work to earn points in class won't be wasted, even if it means getting the other houses in trouble. It also makes students in house pressure each other to not divulge important information over fear of losing points. It probably also makes the students that are less capable of earning points in class feel worthless and apathetic. I imagine if you were to plot average test scores, disciplinary action, and post-hogwarts productivity and mark the establishment of the house cup you'll find evidence to support my claims."

"That was very well thought out. I'm impressed Mr. Potter. I'll think about your arguments and I might bring it up to the headmaster." Flitwick said smiling. "Alright class, back to work."

"You thought of all of that over night?" Hermione asked eyebrow raised.

"Of course not, I went to Diagon Alley at the end of July, it's been more than a month." Harry said smiling before turning to Blaise again "Please show me what you're doing."

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When they got to lunch Hermione and Tonks headed towards the closest end of the Ravenclaw table. Harry however turned and headed to the far end of the Hufflepuff table where Crabbe and Goyle were sitting alone. Harry sat down opposite them and poured himself a goblet of pumpkin juice. "Hey guys. You were friends with Malfoy before we came here right?"

"His father was trying to turn us into Draco's minions." Vincent said. "We're fine with Draco though, him being in Gryffindor makes things difficult though."

"Why?" Harry asked. "You're not Slytherins."

"Our families would be upset if we were friends with Gryffindors or Hufflepuffs." Greg replied.

"Your families don't matter here. Besides wouldn't being a Hufflepuff exempt you from that rule?" Harry said. "Either way just take a look, Malfoy is sitting alone at the Gryffindor table. He is probably getting picked on by his house mates. I imagine it would be the same if a Weasley got sorted into Slytherin. He needs friends, there is no reason that you shouldn't help him and yourselves by being there."

"What if he refuses to consort with Hufflepuffs?" Vincent asked surprising Harry, the Crabbe in his world would never know the word 'consort'.

"Then leave him to rot if you want to, he'll only have himself to blame." Harry said, taking a bite out of a piece of toast. After a few moments of silent thought Crabbe and Goyle looked at each other and nodded once. Together they stood up and walked over to Draco, Harry couldn't hear anymore but it looked as if Draco snapped off a snide remark, looking angry, a few seconds later relief washed over his face and his two friends sat down to finish lunch. It was then that Harry noticed the presence behind him. Looking up and recognizing the faces he smirked and greeted them. "Abbott, Costello."

"And here I was thinking that I wouldn't hear that joke anymore." Hannah said with a groan "I've heard that from almost every muggle I've known."

"Yea, it's pretty bad." Harry admitted.

"Costello?" The second girl asked.

"Sorry Miss Bones, Abbott and Costello are a famous muggle comedy duo." Harry explained. "Don't worry you won't hear it from me again. So what can I do for you lovely ladies?"

"Susan and I just wanted to say that we heard what you said to Crabbe and Goyle. Right Suze?" Hannah said turning to a very red Susan.

"R-right, that was really n-nice." Susan said fighting to get her blush under control.

"You're a good guy Potter." Hannah said. "Come on Susan, we have to get ready for class."

Harry watched Hannah drag Susan away and could just make out Susan when she spoke. "He said we're lovely!"

"Oh please." Hannah's reply was a bit louder. Now alone at the Hufflepuff table Harry started to feel weird. He soon stood up and made his way back to the Ravenclaw table and joined Hermione and Tonks.

"What was that about?" Hermione asked as Harry sat down.

"Everyone deserves a friend." Harry said with a shrug.

"And the girls?" Tonks inquired.

"What you don't think I'll be happy with two do you?" Harry asked with a wink, Hermione's jaw dropped when she figured out what he meant, Tonks just blushed. "Seriously though they just wanted to say thanks."

"Thanks for what?" Hermione asked.

"Helping out two Hufflepuffs. I may have earned some hufflepoints. OW!" Tonks had punched him.

"Bad jokes are not encouraged." Tonks said with a straight face. A moment later Hermione started to laugh.

Harry and the girls arrived at Transfiguration just before the Gryffindors started showing up. As they filed in Draco caught Harry's eye and nodded his thanks.

"When do you think McGonagall is going to show up?" Tonks asked looking around.

"Shh." Harry replied.

"That's a strange answer."

"Shh."

"Don't keep shushing me." Tonks replied as the door burst open, it seems that Ron made Neville late today as he had made Harry late the first time.

"Shwew, looks like we made it mate." Ron said elated.

"No, actually you didn't." Harry said. "Professor McGonagall has been sitting on the desk the whole time."

"What, no she hasn't." Tonks said. "There is just that dumb cat."

The thud of Harry's head hitting the desk was followed quickly by the gasp of surprise from the students as McGonagall turned back into her human form. Without looking up Harry said "That's why I was shushing you."

"Indeed, it would be wise to listen to Mr. Potter in the future Miss Tonks." McGonagall said. "And one point each from Mr. Weasley and Mr. Longbottom. What gave me away Mr. Potter?"

"This is transfiguration class, the animagus transformation is one of the hardest we'll discuss in school and finally you registered your form with the ministry." Harry said.

"You've researched me?" McGonagall asked.

"Yes, I know stuff about all of the professors." Harry said calmly.

"Well, normally I would give points, but Filius has told me that you don't accept them." McGonagall said. "Um, good work."

McGonagall started going through her normal briefing on the dangers of transfiguration and the types leading into talking about animagi and metamorphmagi. Suddenly she stopped mid-sentence. "I was going to ask Miss Tonks if she had anything to say about being a metamorphmagus but after the display last night I will open the question to Mr. Potter too."

"Erm, well you can't learn the talent...umm...we all have a base form, we're both wearing ours right now, and when we free form we normally base it on our base form." Tonks stammered out.

"We can specifically replicate other people." Harry said as he shifted into Tonks' shape. "But only what we've seen. For instance I haven't seen Tonks...erm...I haven't seen her...um...details, so all you can see of her is her hands and face."

Harry quickly dropped back into his normal form starting to blush. McGonagall smiled slightly and turned to Tonks. "Anything you would like to add?"

"Sure!" Tonks said standing up and turning into Harry. "Anyone wanna see Harry's 'details'?"

She got as far as grabbing the hem of her shirt before Harry stopped her. "If you show them mine I'll show them yours if I ever find out, maybe I'll wait a few years until we're old enough for there to be something to look at too."

Tonks quickly sat down and turned back into herself with a blush to match Harry's. "Mutually assured embarrassment." She muttered darkly.

The class settled down and soon McGonagall was passing out matches to turn into needles. Harry's match was a perfect needle within moments of it hitting his desk. Hermione's gasp is what drew McGonagall's attention back to him.

"I figured you would be first Mr. Potter." McGonagall said smiling. "If I were to gamble I would say that Miss Tonks will be the next person to finish."

"You would be wrong too." Harry said with a cocky grin. "She finished just before you said that."

"Ah, good work both of you." McGonagall said as she resumed her rounds.

"Oi, Potter. Betcha I'll end up doing better in this class than you." Tonks taunted.

"Not if today is any indicator." Harry replied

"You only finished first because she gave you your match before she gave me mine." Tonks argued.

"Fine, I guess in the future I'll have to wait on you."

"You'd better." Tonks said, then smiled. "There is no way that some humdrum little boy is going to top me at my art."

"Oi, don't talk about my little boy." Harry admonished. "At least not in public."

"I'd rather be talking about your big boy but I don't lie." Tonks shot back.

"Oh, I totally walked into that one." Harry said.

"Yea, you did." Tonks said. "Rumor mill will probably say that we were caught naked together last night or something."

"And so you choose to make it worse by voicing the words yourself." Harry said shocked. "If that is the rumor I am going to blame you."

Harry picked up his needle and walked away from the table. He sat down again between Neville and Draco with Ron on Neville's other side looking starstruck. "Don't know if you guys are having trouble but thought I'd offer help if you want it."

"Ron's is a little pointy, I haven't gotten anywhere." Neville said. "I could use all the help I can get."

"You'll need more help than Potter can give." Draco sneered before turning to Harry. "They're both practically squibs. I'm having a hard time getting the hole to form though."

"Then lets go in order. Ron show me what you're doing." The red head obliged. "You're being too forceful with your wand, little things little motions. Neville?"

With his help Draco managed a perfect needle, Ron's was still without a hole and wasn't very shiny and Neville's was still made of wood but otherwise perfect. After class was dismissed Harry held Neville and Ron back until the room was empty.

"Hey, um I noticed that both of your wands look old, Ollivander told me that wands that aren't used by the wizard they bonded too do lesser quality work. As far as I know you both have very good reasons for having the wand you do, but if you don't you might want to think about getting one suited to you." He quickly turned and walked out of the room before they could answer.

That night Harry took the map to bed with him and laid there watching Wormtail wander around in the first year Gryffindor dorms. When the boys were all in their beds Harry started counting time. After an hour he disillusioned himself and warped over to their tower.

All six occupants were asleep fortunately. The five boys in their beds and Peter on Ron's desk, which appeared otherwise unused. Harry quietly stunned Wormtail and dropped him into a large glass jar, that Harry had made unbreakable, along with a note that read:

Sirius Black is innocent. To prove it I have provided you with this illegal animagus. His name is Peter Pettigrew and he is the one who betrayed the Potters that night. He is the one who framed Sirius Black. He is the one who worked for Voldemort. He has been hiding with the Weasley family since that night when everyone thought he died.

Sincerely,

Anon.

He quickly warped over to the ministry and left the rat on Madam Bones' desk. I wonder if I'll hear about this from Susan.

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A/N: Thanks to all of you for your enthusiasm, this is going to be a long one because I don't feel there are any good break points today.

Working of the formatting. Also updates are most likely to happen on Saturdays or Mondays.

Tuesday. It was Tuesday. It had to be Tuesday. And something kept prodding him in the cheek. "Tonks if you don't stop poking me I'll bite your finger off."

"Well wake up then. We've got potions, history and flying today." Tonks said.

"Don't remind me. I hate Tuesdays." Harry said sitting up.

"You don't need to keep showing me your 'details' Harry." Tonks said as the covers fell off his shirtless torso. "And what's wrong with Tuesdays?"

"Only that they bring potions and history classes." Harry replied groggily. "You'll hate them too soon enough."

"What don't you like potions and history?" Tonks asked feigning surprise.

"Just the professors." Harry said walking over to his dresser. "Binns is as boring as a ghost teaching history sounds. Snape is worse. Come on let's go eat."

"Good morning Harry!" Hermione practically shouted when he left the staircase. This would have only been slightly irritating if Hermione hadn't been hiding first, instead though Harry jumped in surprise.

"Jesus Hermione. Don't scare me like that." Harry said with his right hand valiantly trying to hold his heart inside his chest.

Hermione laughed and ran out of the tower. As Harry made to chase her down Tonks grabbed his hand and pulled him around to face her. Next thing he knew she was leaning in towards him. "You're floating." She whispered and let go of his hand.

She saw his eyes go wide as he dropped about an inch back to the floor. "Don't tell anyone."

"I won't, but I won't forget either."

Tonks hooked her arm through his and dragged him out the portrait hole. I expect she is going to drag me a lot of places. He thought. Well, at least I accept it. Wonder what she means by it.

As it turned out Hermione only made it to the first turn before she realized she wasn't being chased. Feeling a little disappointed she waited for the other two to catch up. She hooked his other arm and the three of them made their way down to the Great Hall.

"I expect you to be wearing clothes when you arrive to class Mr. Potter." That tone of voice would never leave Harry's memory, the words themselves made Harry stop and turn.

"Of course I will Professor Snape. The rules clearly indicate that the school uniform must be worn for all classes and feasts." Harry said. "You'll excuse me but breakfast waits and I am hungry."

"Five points from Ravenclaw for your disrespect." Snape sneered as Harry walked away. Harry's lack of response just made him more agitated.

"I hate Tuesdays." Harry muttered as they sat down before filling the largest mug he could find with coffee.

"You shouldn't treat your Professors like that Harry." Hermione admonished.

"What's he going to do? He can't kick me out of school and it doesn't matter if he kicks me out of class." Harry said nonchalantly.

"If you're kicked out of potions you won't be allowed to continue schooling." Hermione said.

"First that doesn't make sense, even if every potion I brew kills the consumer they wouldn't halt my education. Potions aren't that important." Harry said. "Besides I could just get a private tutor or test out."

"How would you test out?" Tonks asked.

"If I passed the O.W.L." Harry said. "Actually that's not a bad idea, I might bring it up to Dumbledore if things get too bad."

"Are you serious?" Hermione asked.

"It'd be funny but no, private tutor maybe depending on how Snape is." Harry said. "If that happens I'll be sure to invite you two as well."

"On a related note. Why aren't you eating anything other than fruit?" Tonks asked.

"How is that related?" Hermione asked.

"It just is, don't think about it too much." Tonks said with a smile. "So Harry, what's the answer?"

"Erm, well I don't like waffles or pancakes. Potatoes get boring as breakfast food so they rarely grace my morning plate. I have a lot of rules about eggs and these haven't been cleared yet. There are few breakfast vegetables other than potatoes so I stick with fruits and grains." Harry said with a shrug.

"Are you vegetarian?" Tonks asked.

"Yes." Harry replied. "and if the meals don't start getting better I am going to have to go have a chat with the house elves. I've had almost no protein or iron since we got here. Filled with Neanderthals this place is."

"Can't we just skip potions?" Harry whined as he was pulling his pants up.

"No Harry, we can't." Tonks said grumbled inside the curtains of his bed. "These curtains are really in the way."

"Why not? It is going to be bad." Harry said.

"You don't know that." Hermione said. She was the reason she and Tonks were sitting on Harry's bed curtains drawn while he changed.

"Yes, I do know that." Harry said as he pulled his shirt over his head.
"You can open the curtains now, I'm dressed enough not to offend
Hermione's delicate sensibilities."

"Shut up." Hermione said as Tonks threw the curtains open. "My
sensibilities are not delicate."

"Then why can't you look at a guy wearing shorts without turning
beet red?"

"Boxers are not shorts Harry." Hermione said turning slightly pink.

"Semantics." Harry said dismissively.

"No Harry, not semantics. There is a big difference between
underwear and outerwear." Hermione said.

"Like which one is on the outside." Harry said. "Boxers are just thin
cotton shorts when they're the only things you're wearing."

"Looked more like silk to me." Tonks said quietly.

"The point is that guys don't have the same attachment to their
underwear that girls do." Harry said. "I bet that if you asked every
guy in school if they knew what color their underwear was without
looking ninety percent or so wouldn't be able to tell you. I would bet
the opposite for girls."

"What does that have to do with getting seen in your underwear?"
Hermione asked.

"Underwear is lounge wear." Harry said shrugging on his last layer.
"Come on, if we must go let's go."

"Told you that was going to be bad." Harry said as they left the
potions room.

"I still can't believe that he said you were unprepared when you
answered two of his three questions." Hermione said.

"I could have answered them all but then he would have picked
something else." Harry said. "I don't really care about it too much."

"I wanna know why he has it out for you so bad." Tonks said.

"Oh, that is an easy answer." Harry said raising his voice enough to carry back into the classroom. "He is still in love with my mother and never got over her falling for my father, who was his rival and my dad bullied him sometimes. I look like my dad, but with my mother's eyes, so every time he sees me he thinks of my father and is too juvenile to let it go after all these years. It is really rather pathetic."

"DETENTION POTTER!" Snape's voice called out from the classroom.

"No." Harry called back as he kept walking, Hermione looked like she was about to faint. "Not only that but rumor has it that his actions led Voldemort to killing my parents, so seeing me might also remind him that he got his one true love killed."

The door behind them slammed open as a furious Snape stormed out. He grabbed Harry by the arm and started dragging him down the hall. "You'll be expelled for this."

"No I won't." Harry said then looked back down the hall and called to the girls. "I'll see you at lunch in a few minutes once we're done in the headmaster's office."

"You're just like your father." Snape sneered. "He thought he was above the rules too."

"If you took the time to get to know me Professor you'd see that I am much more like my mother." Harry replied casually "And what makes you think I think I'm above the rules?"

"You wear pajamas to breakfast and you refused detention."

"And neither of those times was I doing anything that violated the rules of this school." Harry said.

"So arrogant." Snape said as they approached the gargoyle that guarded Dumbledore's office. Snape gave the password and they were soon at the door.

"Come in." Dumbledore called out from inside. "Ah what brings you here today Severus? And with Mr. Potter too."

"I want this brat expelled." Snape said.

"On what grounds?" Dumbledore asked.

"Blatant disrespect for the rules and staff." Snape said.

"Oh, what did he do?"

"He spread rumors about me after refusing the detention I sentenced him to." Snape said.

"And what do you have to say for yourself Harry?"

"Only that I don't serve detention for complying with the rules." Harry said as he placed his wand to his temple. "And that I am supplying a memory of the event as is standard for appealing against disciplinary measures."

Harry walked over to the cabinet where Dumbledore kept his pensieve and threw the memory in himself before turning back to the stunned adults. It was that moment that Fawkes flamed in and called out before landing on Harry's shoulder and nuzzling his cheek. "It's good to see you again too Fawkes, I think I'm done here, if you want we can go to the Great Hall and visit over lunch, you can meet Tonks and Hermione then too."

Fawkes trilled in what was obviously acceptance and flamed the two of them out of the office immediately, leaving Snape and Dumbledore completely astounded. Dumbledore recovered first, he spoke in a shaky voice. "Well, that's that then isn't it, I'll take a look at the memory and decide what course of action to take."

Snape nodded dumbly and walked out the door still trying to figure out how many new questions he had about Harry. He knows my past, he knows the rules of appeal, he knows how to draw out a memory, he knew where Dumbledore kept his pensieve, a first year shouldn't know any of these things. And Fawkes, 'It's good to see you again...' like they've met before. What is that boy's secret?

Snape didn't know it but Dumbledore was on an identical thought train.

When Hermione and Tonks got to the Great Hall they grabbed seats and quickly started moving all the meat dishes away from their spot and brought all the vegetarian dishes closer. They were thinking that they would simply surprise Harry, after what had to be a bad meeting, but just ended up being disappointed by the variety. They were filling their plates when fire erupted right behind Hermione, who screamed and tried to jump out of the way but tripped on the bench and fell on her face in front of Harry, who was laughing.

"Didn't think I would get my revenge so soon." Harry said smiling down at her. "Need help up?"

"Where did you come from?" Hermione asked as she took his hand and got pulled to her feet.

"Dumbledore's office via phoenix travel." Harry said as he sat down. "Hermione, Tonks, this is Fawkes, Dumbledore's phoenix. Fawkes this is Hermione Granger and Tonks, they're my friends."

"Why do you have Professor Dumbledore's phoenix?" Hermione asked.

"We were chatting and done up there so Fawkes brought me down." Harry said. "I offered food, are there grapes anywhere?"

"Yea, right here." Tonks said sliding a bowl of grapes over. "Can you really understand him?"

"It is more empathy than words, but I get what he's trying to say." Harry said feeding Fawkes a grape. "And don't look now but everyone is staring at you."

"They're not staring at me Harry, they're staring at you." Tonks replied. "Why would they be looking at me?"

"Your hair is green."

"You have an extremely rare and powerful magical creature casually hanging out on your shoulder." Tonks replied.

"So does that mean I win?" Harry asked with a smile.

"Shut it Potter." Tonks replied waving a potato wedge at him menacingly. "There really isn't a good selection for vegetarians here, it is degrading to threaten people with potatoes."

"So anyway, How much trouble are you in?" Tonks asked a few moments later.

"Probably none, they can complain and take as many points as they want but there are no rules against disrespect so they can't issue detentions or expulsions for it. There is also a rule that states that you can appeal unjust disciplinary actions, such as assigning detentions for disrespect." Harry said shrugging. "Worst Dumbles can really do give me a lecture."

"Potions class probably just got a lot harder for you though." Hermione said.

"Meh, the tutor is still a viable option." Harry replied. "Who knows it might catch on and leave Snape alone teaching himself."

"How do you know all these rules?" Hermione asked finally catching what had been bothering her.

"I've had over a month since I was at Diagon Alley. There are all sorts of things you can find there and learn in a month." Harry said.

"Are you going to use that as your excuse for everything?" Hermione demanded. "There is no way that one person could do as much as you claim to have done within a month."

"Not for everything, only the things that it is true for or that I don't want to explain." Harry said. "In other words whenever I say that it probably isn't true."

"So you're just going to lie to us?" Hermione asked appalled.

"People get angry when you tell them that something is none of their business, and it is easy to say you read about something somewhere without rousing suspicion from casual observers." Harry said. "And you're no casual observer Hermione. In fact I would bet that you have a list of all the strange things I have done since we met."

"How did you know?"

"Add it to your list." Harry smirked. "Or I could just say I learned about it from a book from Diagon Alley."

"I wish you would trust us." Hermione said

"I do trust you, that doesn't mean that I am going to share all or even any of my secrets at the drop of the hat." Harry said. "Likewise though I don't expect you to be completely forthcoming about all of your secrets. Besides some of the things I haven't told you is simply because it isn't time for them to be known."

"Will you tell me how you know so much about me?" Hermione asked.

"Someday, sooner than later I hope but I don't really know what I am looking for before I do. I figure it will just feel appropriate eventually." Harry said. "Although I will tell you that it is all incidental, it is also how I know about the Professors and a few other students. Actually that one really big secret will cross off most of your list."

After finishing their lunch and saying goodbye to Fawkes the three left the hall on their way to history. Dumbledore managed to catch up to the en route. "Harry, may I have a word?"

"Of course, sir." Harry said. "Is this a walk and talk or a drag me into an empty room kind of conversation?"

"Not a conversation, just a word. I have overturned Professor Snape's detention, this time, but you really must show your professors the respect they deserve." Dumbledore said in a grandfatherly tone.

"Sorry Professor, Death Eaters don't deserve any respect." Harry said.

"Professor Snape returned to our side before the end of the war and took great personal risk spying for our side." Dumbledore said. "He has my full confidence."

"Once a Death Eater, always a Death Eater." Harry said. "Have you ever found out the process for giving someone the dark mark?"

"Well, no. It doesn't matter though Professor Snape has shown his loyalty over and over through the years." Dumbledore said firmly.

"Only because he doesn't have a master to go back to now that he is worthless as a spy. If I were you I would question him under veritaserum and ask who he would be loyal to if Voldemort was resurrected."

"I trust Severus." Dumbledore said.

"Then you're partially responsible for any damage he does." Harry said. "I will give him the respect he seems to think he has earned if and when he proves himself to not be a Death Eater and drops his childish grudge. He holds me responsible for people's actions before I was even born, I only hold him responsible for his own. If he persists I will stop going to potions class and hire a tutor, open to anyone who doesn't think Snape is a worthy teacher."

"It isn't your decision as to who is or isn't fit to teach." Dumbledore said.

"And I can't get him fired, I'm fine with that, but it doesn't mean I have to go be abused to not learn anything." Harry said. "Class is about to start Professor. May we be excused?"

"Very well." Dumbledore said sounding disappointed before he turned and walked away.

"Y-y-you said his name..." Tonks said.

"Yea, I'm probably going to say it many more times in the future too." Harry said. "You should too."

"I need to think." She said and walked into the history classroom without another word. Harry followed laughing, he nodded to Crabbe and Goyle and waved to Hannah and Susan, and sat down between Tonks and Hermione.

"What are you doing?" Hermione finally thrown out of her thoughts by Harry sitting down and settling down for a nap.

"Gunna take a nap." Harry said. "Binns will never notice and he is just going to be reading the text book verbatim."

"You don't know that!" Hermione whispered harshly.

"Page 5, follow along. I heard so from someone whose had him before." Harry said closing his eyes. "Wake me up when it's time for flying."

Harry was awake enough to groggily respond to role call after Binns made his normal entrance through the blackboard. After that he fell asleep and Hermione found that he was right about Binns. Tonks fell asleep halfway through class and by the time it was over half the class needed to be woken up.

"It will be easier to stay awake once it gets cold." Harry said between yawns as they left.

"You should really pay more attention though." Hermione said. "Someday he is going to say something that isn't in the book."

"And I'll have you there to catch that highly improbable event." Harry said. "Besides I don't care if I never get better than an 'Acceptable' in that class."

"D'ya think we should fly after that?" Tonks asked half asleep.
"Seems dangerous."

"Aww is wittle Nymmy afraid she'll fall asleep behind the handle?" Harry teased earning a glare and a punch.

"If you ever call me Nymmy again I'll..." Tonks started.

"Do what? You won't do anything about it will you?" Harry followed up. "It's cuz you secretly like it."

"I DO NOT!" Tonks shouted blushing slightly.

"It's okay to admit it Nymmy, and don't worry if you fall I'll catch you." Harry said.

"You'd better start running Potter." Tonks said pulling up her sleeves and drawing her wand.

"eep" Harry said dryly before smiling, turning and sprinting down the hall and out onto the grounds. Tonks tore off after him and Hermione waited to start running until she was outside and caught up at the quidditch pitch. The Hufflepuffs were following but Harry noticed that Susan had broken away from the pack and moved to the side to talk to a Gryffindor, from the distance he couldn't tell who.

He must have stopped walking because all of a sudden he found himself being pulled across the grass towards the far end of the line of brooms. Harry was sad to note that he could fly faster than any broom available for another two years. Hermione looked understandably nervous and Tonks looked tired and excited. She also had a look of confidence. "Looks like you've flown before."

"Yeah," Tonks admitted. "But don't worry, you'll catch up eventually. After a few years devoted effort maybe."

"Bet you aren't as ahead of me as you think you are." Harry said.

"Oh yeah? You're on!" Tonks exclaimed.

"How do you intend to determine your comparative skill?" Hermione asked quietly.

"First one on the quidditch team?" Tonks suggested.

"I don't want to play though." Harry said.

"Why wouldn't you want to play quidditch? It's great!" Tonks shouted causing most of the other kids look their way.

"Because it isn't a viable career option for me." Harry said. "If I got a spot on the team that would mean that someone who might want to play professionally wouldn't be able to play here, which would seriously hurt their chances for no real reason."

"Oh, well we'll think of something sometime." Tonks said. "Maybe late at night with mood lighting."

"Or in the morning in my bed?" Harry replied raising an eyebrow.

"Why do you two flirt so much?" Hermione interjected, causing Tonks to break down into a giggling fit.

"Just trying to make each other blush." Tonks said cheerily.

"Why?"

"Metamorphs can control the blood flow to their cheeks." Harry said. "Unintentionally blushing is somewhat similar to laughing until you have an accident, but less extreme."

The anecdote set both girls laughing again until Madam Hooch arrived. Tonks seemed to be trying to turn this class into a competition with Harry as first she said "UP!" with enough authority that the broom sprang into her hand hard enough that it must have hurt. She later claimed that during the first kick off, hover, set down routine that she hovered at exactly several feet off the ground. She refused to answer when Hermione asked her how she could be exactly inexact.

"Take the rest of class to drift around and naturalize the sensation of flying. I'll be around to help, just don't go too high or too fast." Madam Hooch announced as there was about twenty minutes left of class.

"Hey Harry!" Susan called as she flew up alongside Harry and Hermione, Tonks was flying slightly ahead in her efforts to keep pretending they were racing.

"Hey Susan. How's it going?" Harry asked.

"Fine, so listen, evidently in this morning's class Longbottom and Malfoy both fell off their brooms." Susan said. "Lavender said that Neville broke his wrist and Malfoy is fine."

"Oh, that's terrible." Hermione said.

"The Gryffindors all think that a Slytherin, Teddy Nott to be specific, had something to do with Malfoy's fall." Susan said. "Gregory and Vincent are looking to beat him up now. I think we've convinced them not to though."

"Oh thank goodness." Hermione said relieved.

"Yeah, Draco should have a part in the revenge if any takes place."

Harry said

"Harry!" Hermione shrieked

"What?"

"He shouldn't be looking for revenge." Hermione said.

"Why not? If he never stands up for himself people will walk all over him." Harry said. "It doesn't mean that it has to be violent revenge or anything."

"What else is there?"

"Really? We're in a school of magic and you ask what options there are other than assault?" Harry said. "You're not much of a schemer are you?"

"I have no reason to scheme." Hermione said.

"There is always a reason to scheme." Harry replied. "But anyway if I were Draco I would think of something that doesn't harm Nott at all but hits him in the ego."

"Why would Nott have even done that in the first place though?" Hermione asked.

"The Slytherins have all been out for Malfoy blood." Tonks called back from ahead. "Malfoys have been snakes for generations, Draco was probably not only expecting to get sorted there but also take it over and be the alpha snake."

"Political affluence is important to them." Susan said. "Lucius Malfoy is a big player in our political world. His political enemies will probably be encouraging the harassment of Draco because it may lower Lucius' political capital."

"That's horrible." Hermione cried.

"That's life." Harry said. "If Draco was sorted into Slytherin he might be filling the role that Nott is now."

"Probably." Susan said nodding. "Lucius may have even taught him lessons in advanced school yard bullying."

"It doesn't help that Gryffindors are idiots either." Tonks said pulling back to join the group at last.

"What does that have to do with anything?" Hermione asked.

"They still want to think he is a snake." Tonks replied. "Tonight I'll probably hear people grumbling that they wish he had broken something."

"How do you know how they feel about Draco?" Harry asked.

"Hey, you're not the only one who can and does talk to the other houses." Tonks defended immediately. "If you're trying to be Mr. Popular I can try to be Mrs. Popular."

"Mrs.?" Harry asked slyly.

"Shut up, you know what I mean." Tonks said rolling her eyes.

"So any other news from the lions?" Harry asked.

"Weasley has lost his rat. He's pretty torn up about it I guess." Susan said with a shrug. "Lavender said that it was probably just seizing its chance for freedom and getting away from Ron."

Their laughter was soon pierced by Madam Hooch's whistle and they were all instructed to bring their brooms back in and line them up, before being dismissed. As the group was walking inside Hannah Abbott caught up with them.

"So you and Dumbledore's bird?" Hannah said not wasting anytime with frivolities such as greetings.

"What about me and Dumbledore's bird?"

"Exactly."

"I'm afraid I don't know what you're talking about." Harry said growing confused.

"What do you mean you don't know what I mean?"

"What do you mean what do I mean what do you mean?" Harry countered.

"What?" Tonks interjected.

"Erm, right then, straight forward, why did you have Dumbledore's bird and what does it mean for future reference?" Hannah asked.

"Right, not that it is any of your business but, I was in Dumbledore's office before lunch, when our business was concluded I invited Fawkes to lunch and he took us down to the Great Hall. I don't know if it will ever happen again so don't count on it." Harry said. "On the same note though I don't know it won't happen again so don't be surprised if it does."

"What's so special about you that you get a visit from a phoenix?" Hannah asked.

"Dunno, ask Fawkes." Harry said with a shrug.

"I heard that phoenix are creatures of the light so pure that they only come to those who are pure of heart." Hermione said breathlessly.

"Well if that is true Fawkes needs to re-evaluate what counts as pure of heart, I sure don't." Harry said.

"You shouldn't say that, you're plenty good." Hermione insisted.

"Nah, I'm neither light nor dark, somewhere in between." Harry said.

"Dim?" Tonks asked earning a quick glare from Harry.

"Cloudy?" Hannah suggested.

"Faded?" Susan asked.

"Dull?" Tonks said.

"Whose side are you on?" Harry said pretending to be insulted.

"Mine!" Tonks said smiling.

"You're not using dark magic are you?" Susan asked suddenly nervous.

"Well no, although I don't like that term." Harry said. "Light and dark are mindsets rather than tool sets. Light magic can be used for dark purposes just like dark magic can be used for light purposes and using one doesn't preclude you from being the other."

"In other words you think it is the ends, not the means, that matters." Hermione said.

"That is indeed my philosophy." Harry said. "I do still have limits though."

Hermione nodded at his statement. "A lot of people would say that you're wrong though and what you do matters less than how you do it."

"Are you one of those people?" Harry asked.

"I don't know, I'm only eleven I still have time to decide whether I'm an ends or means kinda gal." Hermione said. "But I don't think getting a good grade would justify cheating."

"Sure but wouldn't saving the school from a horde of inexplicably deadly gerbils be worth skipping class?" Harry asked.

"Deadly gerbils?" Tonks asked one eyebrow raised.

"Inexplicably deadly gerbils." Harry said. "It means it defies explanation. It is perfectly believable and also not the point."

"Well I guess it would be worth skipping class." Hermione said trying to steer the conversation back on course. "But it would be better if you could do it without skipping class."

"Fair enough, but anyway if you were a light person you would skip class to kill the gerbils, if you were dark you would skip class to flee to safety and let the school handle itself. I, however, would use fighting the gerbils as an excuse to skip class." Harry said. "Planting myself firmly in the middle somewhere."

Hannah ran into Harry as he suddenly stopped a few steps later.
"What the hell Harry?"

"Sorry Hannah," Harry said offering her a hand up. "I just had that sense of doom that tells me something in that conversation will haunt me for years."

"And if it wasn't going to already it sure will now!" Tonks said gleefully.

"How long til dinner?" Harry asked.

"More than an hour still." Hermione asked. "We should study."

"No, we shouldn't." Hannah objected.

"We could go exploring." Susan suggested.

"It doesn't seem like exploring when there is no danger." Tonks said.
"We could meet up after curfew and explore then, now it will just be getting hopelessly lost and trying to find the Great Hall before we starve."

"Sounds good to me." Harry said brightly. "Let's take this left an head boldly into where we haven't gone yet!"

"Where are you guys going?" A voice called from behind the group, who all turned around to see Ron and Neville.

"Ah, Neville, Ronald, join us won't you?" Harry said gesturing them forward.

"Where are you guys going?" Ron asked again

"We're getting hopelessly lost." Susan said.

"And if we're successful we're going to try to find the Great Hall." Hannah said with a smile. "Harry insists that it will be fun."

"You're trying to get lost?" Ron said incredulously. "You're insane."

"I'm in." Neville said. "I don't have to do anything do I?"

"Nope just follow along, you'll probably get involved with the conversations though." Harry said leading them off. "That isn't my fault it's just a proximity thing."

"You're all insane." Ron grumbled but followed when it was clear that Neville was going with them.

"So, I'm hungry, does anyone know where we are?" Harry asked looking around and figuring out where they were.

"No idea, I think we need to go down though." Tonks said as the rest of the group shook their heads.

"Excellent! Who wants to lead the way back?" Harry asked. "I'm not going to."

"What do you mean you won't?" Hannah asked.

"Are we going to start with the 'what do you mean' thing again?" Harry asked raising an eyebrow. "My job was to get us lost, the second half of the game falls to someone else. How about you Nev?"

Neville's eyes widened suddenly "B-but you s-said I didn't have t-to do anything."

"Well you don't have to, but someone does so why not you? You can't really get us any more lost than we already are." Harry said with a reassuring smile. "It's an adventure."

"I-i don't know" Neville said hesitantly.

"Come on Neville, you'll do great!" Hermione said offering him a big smile.

"Um, a-alright." Neville stuttered as he suddenly took an interest in the floor before turning and walking away, he was several feet away before anyone got over the suddenness and followed. When Hermione met Harry's eyes she blushed a little ducked her head and followed after Neville quickly.

"They'd be cute together." Tonks said. Just like us. She added silently.

"It is too early to say anything." Harry told her with a smile and hooked her arm with his, leading her off after Neville and the rest.

"Do boys even like girls yet?" Tonks asked quietly.

"The one's who are mature for their age do." Harry said. "Do girls like boys yet?"

"Most of them." Tonks replied giggling.

"Good to know." Harry said looking straight ahead and feeling slightly awkward.

"Hey! This door is locked." Ron shouted from the front as he was pulling on a door handle. After a few more tugs he gave up and stuck his eye to the key hole. "There is something in there."

"What is it?" Hermione asked nervously.

"Gum or something." Ron said disgustedly.

"What?"

"In the key hole. Someone stuck gum or something in there. I can't see anything."

"Oh, stand back Ron." Hermione said.

"What are you going to do?" Ron asked as he backed away from the door.

"This." Hermione said as she drew her wand. "Waddiwasi!"

They weren't able to identify the clog as it shot out of the key hole like it was fired out of a gun. Tonks was the first to regain her composure and she moved forward to look through the hole.

"Where did you learn that Hermione?" Harry asked.

Hermione smiled and shrugged before confidently saying "I got a book in Diagon Alley. It has been more than a month since I was introduced to the magical world."

The looks of confusion from the Gryffindors and Hufflepuffs got more exaggerated as the three Ravenclaws all started laughing. Susan shrugged "Must be a claw thing. What can you see Tonks?"

"There is something moving in there, looks big but I can't really see anything." Tonks said moving away so that the others could look.

"This is the forbidden third floor corridor isn't it?" Hermione said excitedly when she took her turn. "I know how to get to the Great Hall from here."

"Lead the way." Neville said looking relieved that he wasn't in charge anymore.

Harry couldn't help but glance at all of the short cuts that they passed while Hermione led the way, but that was the point. It took a few minutes longer than if he had led them but soon they walked into the Great Hall and separated to go to their own house tables.

"Excuse me, I need to talk to Professor Flitwick about getting a balanced meal sometime soon, I'll be right back." Harry said as the girls sat down and walked towards the head table.

"So, you and Neville?" Tonks asked slyly as she started serving herself.

"I don't know what you're talking about." Hermione said quickly filling her goblet. "You and Harry?"

"I don't know what you're talking about either." Tonks said smiling.

"Good to know we're in agreement then." Hermione turned to look her in the eye. "We've only known them for two days, your silence for mine?"

"Deal." Tonks replied and offered her hand and Hermione shook it. "You know you're not what I expected."

"What did you expect?" Hermione asked.

"No offense, but you have the look of a bookworm."

"Oh, don't worry, I am a bookworm." Hermione said smiling.

"Evidentially I'm the first veggie to attend Hogwart's." Harry said as he walked back.

Hermione slid to the side so Harry could sit next to Tonks, who smiled slightly and sent Hermione a grateful glance before speaking up. "So what are you going to do?"

"Flitwick said that he would talk to the house elves but doesn't know if they know how to cook vegetarian." Harry said. "I might have to teach them how to cook."

"Really?" Tonks asked.

"The other option is that I cook for myself but I don't know that the house elves will allow it." Harry said.

"What are house elves?" Hermione asked.

"Muggle mythology calls them Brownies." Harry said. "They are a race of magical creatures that live to help other races. In modern times they cook and clean for magical families. It would probably be easiest to think of them as maids slash butlers."

"And the school employs them?" Hermione asked.

"Just over a hundred I think." Tonks said. "At least that's what my mom said. No one knows for sure except the Headmaster. They try to stay out of sight."

"Oh."

"So after curfew do you guys want to go find out what is on the other side of the door?" Tonks asked

"No, we have homework and we should really start studying." Hermione admonished. "Not to mention that we could get in serious trouble if we're caught."

"Aww, you're no fun." Tonks said.

"You and Harry could go alone." Hermione said with a smirk.

"You just said we should do homework and study." Tonks said.

"What don't you want to spend time alone with me Nymmy?" Harry asked pouting.

"DON'T CALL ME THAT! And that isn't what I meant at all." She mumbled the last part blushing a little. "Hermione is right though, we should do homework, the door will still be there tomorrow night and if we do everything tonight what will we do with the rest of the year." She added hurriedly.

"If we had studied before dinner you would have all the time you could want right now." Hermione said.

"We were studying." Harry replied.

"No we weren't. We were walking around." Hermione said.

"And how much did you learn about the castle? How much did you learn about the others in the group?" Harry winked and added "How much did you learn about Neville?"

Hermione turned bright red and focused her attention on her meal.

A/N: In regards to Harry's special powers:

Flight: Voldy did it in DH, I don't feel bad about letting Harry figure it out.

Metamorph: Harry essentially double his magical potential and accidentally used it to turn on whatever gene it is that makes a magical person a metamorphmagus.

'Invulnerability': If you're familiar with DnD 3.x I'm picturing it more like dr 10/piercing or slashing and dr 1/-. If you aren't familiar with dnd just know that it is less than it sounds and Harry will indeed get injured, he just won't get stubbed toes or paper cuts. It also isn't unique to Harry and I plan on discussing it in text eventually, probably in year 3. One of the people I have slated to gain this

themselves is going to discover it by taking a tumble down several stories of stone Hogwart's stairs. The dumpster was the extreme catalyst for starting this, not the norm. I chose to use a dumpster as an homage to a friend of mine who was walking past a construction site when he was six and took a dumpster to the face. Now he has big scars, a metal plate and no sense of smell.

Mage sight: Will either not matter much or be the set up for a skill that I'm thinking about still, either way the sight at least is going to be fairly common.

I'm thinking about wandless and it will either be impossible for everyone, including Harry, or common enough that it might be on the 7th year DADA curriculum.

I'm also thinking about some sort of fire affinity but I am very hesitant about it.

In regards to Harry vs Draco: In cannon these early interactions were Draco trying to establish his superiority over Harry. This second time around Harry has been the one using the encounters to show his dominance. Harry is pulling from The Dark Lord Playbook's section on crafting minions. This Harry is a manipulative bastard and he knows it.

In regards to Harry's internal age: Most time travel fics have Harry go back either with a mission, to a time of crisis or in the same body that is in the future. My Harry has had almost 10 years of nothing to do after accidentally traveling back, he has had the time to decide that he wants to be a kid again and recapture his youth. He is more of an 11 year old boy with a 73 year old man's memories than an 83 year old man in an 11 year old's body. This way he gets to have peers.

Finally Hermione's change of attitude from observing Tonks, will be explored later, not sure when, it almost made it into this chapter.

Disclaimer: I

AN: I don't know what was up with the formatting. This looks correct on my end, I hope it is really fixed.

Harry woke up early on Wednesday and laid in wait, pretending to be asleep, until Tonks came in. She was about to learn not to be predictable. His dorm mates had left before she arrived and Harry watched through barely cracked eyelids as she crept over to his bed. He imperceptibly tightened his grasp on his pillow when he heard her take a deep breath he knew what was coming and knew it was time to act. Just as she started to bend down to yell in his ear Harry whipped the pillow out from under his head and clobbered her in the face with it. "Morning Nymmy."

"No fair. You're not allowed to be waiting for me." Tonks said looking very put off. "You're supposed to be the one getting woken up, not me. And don't call me Nymmy."

"Yes dear." Harry said as he got out of bed. "Should I be expecting a surprise from Hermione when we get to the common room again."

"She already went to breakfast." Tonks said before lowering her voice slightly. "We're the only ones left in the whole tower."

"Huh," Harry said as he pulled a shirt on. "Why'd she go early?"

"I think she is trying to get Neville to see her sitting alone and take pity or something." Tonks said shrugging. "She was talking a lot and I was half asleep, don't really remember anything she said."

"Oh, So what is today's schedule?"

"Defense with the lions this morning, Herbology with the snakes in the afternoon, and Astronomy with everyone this evening." Tonks said. "How are we supposed to get to the astronomy at midnight without being out of our beds after curfew?"

"Um, special dispensation I think." Harry said. "Or maybe just the size of the group deters punishment. Let's go though, I'm hungry."

"Wait, don't you want to take advantage of the privacy?" Tonks asked lustfully as she put her hand on his chest, and then started

laughing when he blushed so hard he almost turned purple. "Alright, food time."

"You're going to pay for that." Harry said mutinously just before getting dragged out of his dorm and down to the Great Hall.

"Hey Granger! You get abandoned?" Theodore Nott sneered as he approached the girl.

"Probably realized that she wasn't good enough to hang out with them." Tracy Davis added from Nott's left shoulder.

"Leave me alone." Hermione said meekly staring at her plate

"Leave me alooone!" Pansy cried in a baby voice from Nott's right shoulder. "Is the mudblood going to cry?"

"Poor mudblood, can't even keep half-blood friends." Nott said mockingly.

"Excuse me, if you must make an ass out of yourself could you please do it somewhere where you aren't in my way?" Harry asked as he arrived from behind Nott. He quickly sat down next to Hermione and gave her a hug. "Why'd you leave early? The drag down here wasn't the same without you."

"Yea, he almost got away a couple of times, I need the help." Tonks added sitting down on her other side.

"Your pet run away from home Potter?" Nott sneered.

"Oh, you're still here." Harry said turning around on the bench so his back was to the table. "I thought you would recognize a dismissal."

"You can't just dismiss the Scion of the House of Nott like that!" Theodore exclaimed.

"You're right, I can however just dismiss the Scion of Nott along with the Heiresses Parkinson and a Davis like that." Harry said with a condescending smirk. "It's not like you're important."

There was a collective gasp then Nott sputtered for a few seconds before drawing his wand and leveling it at Harry's head. "No one insults a Nott like that. I challenge you to a wizard's duel!"

"When and where Notty?" Harry asked.

"Tonight, midnight, trophy room." Nott sneered.

"I'll be there." Harry said narrowing his eyes as the Slytherins stalked off.

"Harry! I can't believe you! What if you get hurt?" Hermione demanded. "What if you get caught? You could get detentions maybe even get suspended."

"Don't worry, I would bet anything that he doesn't even show up." Harry said with a shrug. "It is probably a trap."

"But?" Hermione asked nervously.

"But nothing. What reason could I possibly have to walk willingly into a trap?" Hermione looked down at her plate to fork another potato and missed the wink that Harry gave Tonks.

"Yup, not even Harry is that stupid." Tonks said helpfully.

"Exactly." Harry said pretending he didn't hear the slight, the girls giggled anyway. "So why did you leave early Hermione?"

Hermione took the chance to blush furiously and glanced at the Gryffindor table before busying herself with her meal again. "Just hungry."

"I see. Well chin up, boys like confident girls as much as girls like confident boys." Harry said.

"What! I mean what does that have to do with breakfast?" Hermione asked avoiding eye contact altogether.

"You tell me." Harry said smiling.

"No fair." Hermione whined. "What is today's schedule?"

"Do you not know or are you trying to change the subject?" Harry asked.

"Trying to change the subject."

"Well in that case, we have Herbology with the 'puffs this afternoon." Harry said.

"And this morning is DADA with the Gryffindors." Tonks said with a flourish. "Speaking of Gryffindors..."

"We're not speaking of Gryffindors, Tonks, or do I have to suggest some topics out of our conversations in the dorm room?" Hermione asked with a glare at the now blushing Tonks.

"You wouldn't." Tonks gasped.

"Wouldn't I?"

"You know you're nothing like your first impression." Harry commented.

"Well a lot can change quickly with the right, or wrong, influences." Hermione said haughtily.

"And what are we? Right or wrong influences?" Harry asked.

"Yet to be determined." Hermione said as the rush of the morning owl post arrived. They all looked up and watched the birds intently, the girls because they were still enraptured by the sight and Harry watched to keep up appearances. They were broken out of their trance as Susan Bones ran over to them waving her copy of The Daily Prophet.

"Harry! Did you get a paper?" She called out as she was approaching.

"No, something good?" Harry asked.

"I don't know but you should see it." Susan said and handed her paper to Harry, opened to the third page where there was a small article down in the corner that caught his eye.

Sirius Black Innocent?

By: Andy Smudgley

Sources inside the Department of Magical Law Enforcement have confirmed to me that they have received new evidence in the Potter murder case. The nature of this evidence has not been confirmed as of this time. My sources have revealed, however, that the evidence may show that Sirius Black was not only innocent of working for He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named but that he may not have been the one to kill all of those muggles and Peter Pettigrew.

This is unfortunately all of the information available at the moment but rest assured I will take it as my personal mission to see to it that the truth in this matter is revealed. Watch for more news.

Andy

"Huh, that was fast." Harry said off handedly while he handed the paper back to Susan.

"What was fast?" Susan asked and Harry froze. "Harry, do you know something?"

"I know lots of things Susan." Harry said with a nervous smile and turned back to his breakfast, which he was happy to note had improved since the day before.

"You're not getting away that easy." Susan said sitting down next to him, opposite Hermione, and passed the article to the girls. "Spill."

"I don't know what you're talking about." Harry said examining a grape with far more care than a grape merits.

"Did you supply the new evidence?" Susan asked.

"I don't know what you're talking about." Harry repeated staring stoically at his fork.

"How did you supply evidence Harry? You were here!" Tonks said.

"I don't know what you're talking about." Harry continued to deny.

"It doesn't really matter how or who. What is this evidence Harry? It has to be big. Why didn't you tell us?" Hermione asked.

"Why do you three keep insisting I know?" Harry asked.

"Because you keep denying it!" Tonks said.

"And because you obviously know Something." Hermione added.

"Fine, I know the six W's okay?" Harry said.

"Six w's?" Tonks asked confused.

"I think he means the five W's." Hermione said getting a blank stare in response. "Who, What, Where, When and Why."

"Oh, so what's the sixth?" Tonks asked.

"How." Harry said.

"That doesn't start with a w though." Susan protested.

"It ends with one though." Harry said.

"Oh." Susan. "So tell us all of them."

"No." Harry said.

"Please." Tonks begged leaning across Hermione to present her best puppy eyes.

"Sorry, I am not letting his name get into this and if that means knowing nothing then I know nothing." Harry said.

"Haaarrrryyy!"

"No, Tonks."

"Fine, I'll see you in class." Tonks said and stalked off.

"I don't think she is used to people telling her no." Susan said. "Isn't she an only child?"

"Yea, so are both of us though, what does that have to do with anything?" Hermione said gesturing to herself and Harry.

"So am I, it's just that it is easy to give an only everything." Susan said with a shrug. "I was spoiled rotten when I was younger."

"So you're saying Tonks is spoiled?" Harry asked raising an eyebrow.

"Maybe a little. That last time she said your name it was a lot like how a girl would beg her father for something though." Susan remarked.

"How are you drawing your conclusions?" Hermione asked.

"General conjecture from years of training to take over my familial seat in the Wizengamot." Susan said. "At least that is what Aunty Amy told me to tell anyone who asked me that."

"It is a good catch all." Harry said nodding.

"Are all magical children raised to avoid telling people things?" Hermione asked. "It seems unnatural."

Susan laughed for a moment before Harry spoke up. "Hermione, Hogwart's is a school primarily for the magical aristocracy. Pretty much every magically raised student here is from a prominent family either politically or societally."

"Oh, I wondered why there were so few students." Hermione said.

"Well I have to get to class." Susan said checking her watch.

"Us too. Ready to make up to Tonks?" Hermione asked.

"Why do I have to make up to her? I didn't do anything wrong."

"Ah, but you're the boy." Susan said with a smirk as she departed.

"Ergh."

When Harry and Hermione made it to the Defense room, after Harry stopped to change, the doors had just opened and the class started

filling in. The desks sat two students each and Hermione watched as Ron took the spot next to Neville. Harry caught Tonks' eye before she turned away and walked over to where Draco was sitting alone.

"Hey Cuz, How's it going?" She asked making sure to be loud enough for Harry to hear and sat down next to Draco.

"Looks like it's you and me kid." Harry said to Hermione in a cheesy detective voice.

"Only if you promise to never talk like that again." Hermione said trying not to laugh.

"Deal." Harry said sitting down noticing that he was directly between Tonks and Quirrell. With a sigh he turned his attention to the teacher and began thinking about how to quietly confirm or dis-confirm the presence of an abomination under a turban.

Surprisingly at the end of class none of the trio had any idea what the Professor had talked about. Harry was too busy wrapped up in his own plots to pay attention, not that he felt he needed to. Hermione spent her time being distracted by Neville a few desks in front of her and the angry steely glare from Harry that she couldn't explain. Tonks was spending her time glaring at Harry, staring at Harry longingly and trying to keep up idle chit chat with Draco. Finally the bell rang and released them.

Harry caught up to Tonks as she was leaving. "Tonks wait."

"What?" Tonks asked crossing her arms while turning around.

"I'm sorry?" Harry said.

"Good, sorry for what?" Tonks asked one eyebrow moving towards her hair.

"Erm, I'm sorry for not giving you exactly what you want when you want it?" Harry said. "It's just that I am not a fountain of information that you can turn on and off when you want."

"Hrmpf!" Tonks said and stormed off.

"Smooth Potter." Draco drawled from behind him. "I don't know what you did but that was a bad apology."

"I don't know what I did either." Harry said.

"She thinks you don't trust her." Draco said.

"What? Why would she think that?" Harry asked.

"I don't know but she kept saying 'Why doesn't he trust me?'" Draco said.

"So...easy conclusion to draw then huh?" Harry asked.

"Yup." Draco said. "Best of luck."

"Thanks, erm, no offense, but why are you helping me?" Harry asked suddenly suspicious.

"Crabbe and Goyle told me what you told them, um, thanks. I guess you aren't necessarily a spoiled brat, and I've decided to give you a chance." Draco said nonchalantly. "You could still turn into a total ponce and I will want nothing to do with you, just so you know."

"Of course, I wouldn't expect any less from a Malfoy." Harry said.

"Just so long as we're clear." Malfoy said with a nod before walking away.

Lunch was awkward for everyone. Tonks had gone to the Hufflepuff table and was eating with Susan and Hannah shooting Harry glares as often as not. Hermione sat opposite Harry at the Ravenclaw table so that he would have somewhere to look other than at Tonks and explained to him what was wrong with his apology and why he was the one to do the apologizing, she had to explain that last part several times.

Tonks evaded Harry on the way down to the greenhouses and once they got there she dragged Hermione off to share a pot, just the two of them. Harry looked to Susan and Hannah who both just gave him a look and chose a pot for themselves. Harry sighed and settled down alone at a pot.

"Trouble in Potterverse?" Anthony Goldstein asked sitting down with Harry.

"Eh, Tonks is mad at me for something silly and evidently I'm in the wrong." Harry said.

"Are you worried about it?" Anthony asked.

"Not too much, I don't think it is that serious, whatever it is, but it does give me pause to have someone who can impersonate me running around with a grudge." Harry said.

"Indeed, reputations do matter." Anthony said. "Are you going to apologize again?"

"I guess I have to." Harry said. "Why is it always the guy apologizing?"

"Don't know, no man does, my father said it is just the way of the world." Anthony said.

"We should change it." Harry muttered glumly.

"But that would mean crossing the women." Anthony said and both boys unconsciously gulped.

"Right, never mind then." Harry said.

"Oh good class, I see you have already split up like I wanted." Professor Sprout announced as she walked in and started class.

"So tell me everything." Tonks said as she and Hermione sat down at their pot.

"There isn't much to tell really." Hermione said. "He looked really upset through all of Defense class, but he didn't say anything."

"He was upset?" Tonks asked sparing a glance to the boy that was now sitting all alone.

"He looked like he wanted to kill Professor Quirrell." Hermione said nodding.

"Really? That's so sweet." Tonks said dreamily.

"Why didn't you let him off the hook after class?" Hermione asked.

"Did you hear what he said?" Tonks said. "That wasn't an apology."

"He's just a boy." Hermione said. "It's not like he knows anything."

"I know," Tonks replied. "But you have to start training them early or they'll never learn."

"Training them?" Hermione asked.

"You know, keep the toilet seat down, open doors, hold chairs, maintain polite company things like that." Tonks listed.

"Boys don't just do that automatically?"

"No silly. They're boys, they don't know anything." Tonks said with a smile. "It's just lucky they have girls to tell them what to do."

"Who told you all of this?" Hermione asked.

"It is a mix of my mom and some romance novels." Tonks said.

"Oh, that makes sense." Hermione replied cheerily. "Oh, here comes Professor Sprout."

Harry caught up to Tonks as they were headed back inside and pulled her into an empty class room, causing her to shout in surprise.

"Harry! What the hell?" Tonks demanded as he closed the door behind him.

"Look Tonks, I can't tell you what you're asking me to tell you. It isn't that I don't trust you, I trust you and Hermione more than anyone, barring two others, at this point." Harry said making her cross her arms. "One of those others is Sirius Black, and the second is the one who doesn't want me to say anything. Telling anyone would be as much of a violation as it would be if you everyone in school what I did when Hermione surprised me."

"Oh." Tonks said remembering what happened. "I guess I can understand that."

"I do trust you and I am sorry that you were hurt over this." Harry said holding his arms open. "But I can forgive you for pressuring me if you can forgive me for being dumb."

"I think I can do that." Tonks said with a shy smile as she stepped into his hug.

"Good, off to dinner then?" Harry asked and started to lead the way when she nodded. He made it to the door before she caught up to him and dragged him the rest of the way.

"Don't do this Harry." Hermione said as the clock approached midnight.

"I have to Hermione." Harry replied.

"But you said that it was probably a trap." Hermione retorted.

"It probably is." Harry said.

"So then why do you have to go?"

"Well if I don't and it isn't a trap I lose honor." Harry said.

"And if you go and it is a trap you'll get caught and get in trouble." Hermione countered.

"That is the point." Harry said getting a confused look from both girls. "Look, I go, get caught and serve detention proving that I went and he didn't."

"Well that makes sense I guess." Tonks said clearly still confused. "But is it worth so much to show him up?"

"Only if I didn't already have a plan to get him back." Harry said.

"Really? Do tell." Tonks said.

"Well it is fairly complicated and I will have to approach someone to get help, but lets just say there are no laws or school rules against using compulsion charms on poultry." Harry said with a smirk.

"Harry are we going to have another conversation about trust?" Tonks asked.

"No, I just don't want to ruin the surprise." Harry said. "Although I may have to keep my accomplices anonymous, if I do it will be because of a side challenge, so don't take offense please?"

"You'd better tell me if you can though!" Tonks said hands on hips.

"Yes dear, I had better get going though." Harry said looking at the clock.

"I still think this is a bad idea." Hermione said.

"Would it make you feel any better if I told you that my retaliation will be deserving of a detention even though I won't be breaking any rules?" Harry asked.

"A little." Hermione said. "But you shouldn't break the rules at all."

"Hermione dear, sometimes there are things that are more important than staying out of trouble and it is everyone's decision as to where that line is drawn." Harry said and walked to the portrait. "I'll see you soon."

"Wait, I'm coming with you." Tonks said and ran over to join him.

"There is no sense in us both getting in trouble." Harry said.

"Consider it prepaying for the next time I don't get in trouble then." Tonks said crossing her arms. "You're not getting away from me, so deal with it."

"I could if I wanted to." Harry said.

"Just shut up both of you and go. If I can't stop you I might as well make sure you're on time." Hermione said with a look of disgust.

Harry shrugged and offered his arm to Tonks. "Shall we?"

Tonks took his arm and dragged him out the portrait hole like normal leaving Hermione shaking her head before going up to sleep after a few moments.

"Shwoo." Tonks said out of breath as they reached the doors to the trophy room. "We wouldn't have made it if you didn't know about that shortcut."

"Yea, lucky us." Harry said.

"I don't think luck had anything to do with it mister. You knew where it was." Tonks said.

"Alright, Harry Potter Secret #1, I know this castle very well already. We never got lost yesterday." Harry said pulling her into the room. "Let's hide here and see what happens."

"How do you know the castle already?" Tonks asked.

"I have a map, I'll show you sometime." Harry said.

"Smell around Mrs. Norris." The two could hear Filch's voice through the trophy room. "They have to be here somewhere."

"Oh no, it's Filch." Tonks said.

"At least it isn't Snape. There are worse people to get caught by." Harry whispered back. They stood in silence as they watched Mrs. Norris walk into view and regard them coldly, Harry knew Filch would be there in a second.

"Ah, what's this? Students out of bed? At midnight?" Filch jeered when he saw them. "We are in trouble now, I suppose you thought a midnight stroll was romantic. Well come with me to see your head of house. You'll be in detention for sure, oh how I wish they would bring back the old punishments."

Filch hauled them both off to see Flitwick and they did indeed each get assigned a detention. By breakfast the whole school knew that Harry Potter and the metamorph Tonks were together late at night. If rumors were to be believed by lunch the two were soul mates and by dinner they were the two most sexually active eleven year olds in

the history of the world, fortunately no one really believed the more extreme rumors.

Theodore Nott and his girls never even tried to conceal their mirth at getting Harry Potter in trouble, catching Tonks was just a nice bonus.

A/N: Hello and thank you again for reading. It took me longer than anticipated to get around to writing this chapter, and when I started it I was expecting it to go through to Halloween. Coming Next time: More Sirius news, Harry's retaliatory prank involving a chicken acting under compulsion, and hopefully the Halloween troll attack.

Hope you enjoyed.

T.E.T.

Disclaimer: Don't

Harry woke very early Thursday morning and quietly got dressed. He checked the map to make sure no one was awake and warped over into the first year girls dorm. "Tonks wake up."

"Dunwann.."

"Tonks wake up right now we have a statement to make." Harry said poking her a few times.

"Murgh what time is it?" Tonks asked slowly opening her eyes.

"Quarter after five." Harry said. "Up!"

"This had better be good...Harry?"

"Yes Nym?"

"How did you get up here?" Tonks asked fully awake for the first time.

"Don't worry about it. I'll stand outside while you get dressed." Harry stood back up and walked out the door, but not without quickly confirming there were no triggers for the stairs where he was stepping.

A few minutes later a bleary eyed Tonks joined him. "You're not wearing pajamas...you must be serious. What are we doing?"

"Psychological warfare." Harry said. "We eat breakfast before anyone else shows up and don't talk to anyone looking angry the whole time, then as soon as Nott arrives we fix him with the death stare and don't let up the whole time he eats."

"To what end?" Tonks asked.

"Just to make him really uncomfortable and on guard." Harry said. "He'll jump at every shadow and sound."

"This is your brilliant detention worthy revenge?" Tonks asked skeptically. "You need to work on you schemes."

Harry laughed at this point as they were walking down the stairs. "No this is just to get him off balance. And then..." Harry jumped down over the last ten stairs into the common room. "BAM! Sunday morning he comes to breakfast expecting to see us shooting death glares at him but instead we smile sweetly, he gets really nervous and then revenge strikes."

"And this all starts now?" Tonks asked. "At five in the freaking morning?"

"If you come with me I'll let you in on the plan." Harry baited. "If you don't you'll have to wait for Sunday."

"Oh fine." Tonks said and dragged him out the portrait.

"You're the one who just woke up!" Harry exclaimed as they were going down the hall. "Shouldn't I be dragging you today?"

"Good point." Tonks said coming to and abrupt stop. "Drag away little boy. Chop chop."

"Ha Ha. I'm not going to drag you." Harry said blandly and then cheerily added "But I'll walk with you."

"Deal." Tonks giggled.

"No more dragging?" Harry asked.

"No sir." Tonks replied with mocking seriousness.

"Good."

"At least not until tomorrow!" Tonks said with a big grin, causing Harry to groan.

Theo Nott discovered that Thursday just how many times during the day he saw Potter and his girl. It seemed like every time he went around a corner he would run into one of them giving him a death glare. The glares weren't the worst. During classes they had together they would sit at the back and every time Theo would glance back they were whispering to each other and shooting pointed looks in his direction. The older Slytherins assured Theo that

he had nothing to worry about so long as Harry didn't enlist the help of the Weasley twins.

His stomach dropped Friday night when Harry and Tonks joined the twins for dinner.

"Hello Twins." Harry said sitting down next to George.

"Harry." The twins responded with a nod.

"This is Tonks, if you haven't already gathered." Harry said while Tonks sat down next to Fred.

"Pleasure." Fred said. "What brings you two to our part of the table?"

"An unusual mix of business and pleasure." Harry said.

"We're trying to scare our target." Tonks added.

"Scare your target how?" George asked.

"You have a reputation." Harry replied with a shrug.

"We see."

"So who's"

"The target?"

"Theodore Nott." Harry said pointing to the panicking boy who flinched when they all looked at him. "Seems to be working."

"I'll say." Tonks said.

"So what are you"

"Going to do?"

"You'll see, just be sure to bring cameras to breakfast on Sunday." Harry said. "Actually if you could spread the word and get as many cameras here as possible I would be much obliged."

"Not that we would ever deter you from pranking a snake." Fred said.

"But can we ask what he did?" George finished.

"Well he challenged me to a formal duel and didn't show." Harry said.

"And sent Filch instead." Tonks finished when Harry's dramatic pause went on long enough.

"Knowing Slytherins he was bragging about it too huh?" Fred asked.
"Did you get caught?"

"Yea, we both got detentions." Harry said casually not mentioning that it was intentional.

"Well good luck." George said and leaned in over the table. "Now huddle up so it looks like we're planning."

"We know the drill." Tonks said as she leaned forward.

"So you kids play quidditch?" Fred asked.

Theo was visibly panicked by the time Potter and the Weasleys started talking. "Hey Blaise, can they do anything that would be worse for my reputation than me apologizing to them profusely?"

"I don't think so Theo." Blaise said. "And you would have to explain to your father why you were afraid of a first year."

"I was afraid you were going to say that." Theo said gulping when the twins and his two tormentors all suddenly looked at him before going back to their conversation. "Maybe I'll just leave school."

"Oh, it can't be that bad." Blaise said trying to reassure the boy, then looked at the four conspirators in question speculatively and smirked. Things were looking good for Blaise.

Sunday morning arrived with Theo entering the Great Hall to see a sight that would have made him turn and go back to bed if he wasn't with Pansy and Tracy. Harry Potter was sitting facing the Slytherin table with Tonks on one side and Hermione to the other. Flanking the girls were the Weasley twins, and all five of them were watching Theo with the most innocent smiles they could muster. It was creepy, but Theo started his breakfast anyway.

After a few minutes the whole Great Hall fell silent just after hearing a loud rooster crowing. Every head turned to the doors of the Entrance Hall as a six foot tall rooster wearing first year Slytherin robes walked in. Theo felt the blood run out of his face as the chicken strut down the aisle, wings half extended and accenting each step with a "Ba-CAW"

It was a few feet away from Theo when he saw that it had light brown hair in the same style as his own. When the rooster reached Theo it crowed again and started eating the food off of Theo's plate. The whole room was a mix of laughing uncontrollably, giggling slightly and staring slack-jawed in shock. Then the sound of cameras flashing reached his ears and Theo turned bright red. Theo took this as his signal to jump up and flee the room, and the laughter.

The chicken made to give chase, eliciting a small shriek from Theo and a Finite from Professor Snape. The rooster burst into a cloud of bright pink smoke and Theo was gone before it cleared, had he stayed though he would have seen that after the smoke cleared there was a large rat in its place with a brown wig on its head.

The Slytherins managed to keep from laughing the whole time but several, including Blaise and Daphne, looked very amused by the event. Things were going very well for Blaise indeed.

"I can't believe that isn't against the rules." Hermione said being one of the few that were stunned silent and the first of them to recover.

"That...Was...Brutal." The twins gasped between laughs, their twin talk making something more cohesive for once.

"Too bad Snape didn't attack it outright first." Harry said pensively even through his grin.

"Why?" Hermione asked growing worried.

"It would have defended itself." Harry said grinning bigger than a moment before.

"You have to tell us who helped you." Fred said.

"That was quality work." George added.

"Well, Let's just say I know a guy who already graduated." Harry said with a shrug. "And you can assume that it was very easy to get him inside the premises."

"Can it, Snape is coming." Tonks said hurriedly making the others stop talking immediately.

"POTTER!"

"Yes Professor?" Harry asked looking up innocently at him.

"What is the meaning of this?"

"The meaning of what sir?"

"Why was my student accosted by a chicken?" Snape snarled barely containing his anger.

"Why are you asking me?" Harry asked. "Why would I know anything?"

"Because you're behind this!" Snape barked.

"You think I could do that level of transfiguration?" Harry asked. "I'm honored, sir. I thought you thought little of me."

"One hundred points from Ravenclaw!" Snape shouted and stalked away.

"Bye Professor Snape!" Harry called out cheerily to his back. "I look forward to class!"

The laughter of the five children as he left would haunt Snape for days.

Charms the next day could only be described as awkward. Nott ended up skipping class and there was a clear division in the class room between the Slytherins and the Ravenclaws. Flitwick had stinging hexes on the schedule for today but decided that it would be safer to teach the bubble charm instead. As it was there was so much tension that Filius was sure the group would throw away their

wands and fight like muggles if any of them were provoked. The only person not on edge was the one in most danger, Harry Potter.

He just sat their smug though. Filius could understand why, he was one of the ones that captured and examined the rat. The results of the test left the staff with more questions than answers. Even though there was only evidence of five spells having been cast, there were at least fifteen magical signatures found. It was as if it took three people to cast each spell. If that wasn't bad enough, when they tested the magical signatures they found that most of them belonged to the staff members. The remaining signatures were completely foreign to Filius.

The professors had interrogated Harry and his friends thoroughly and could only conclude that Harry was the mastermind and someone named 'Nick' did the casting. The staff meeting after those interviews was tense until Minerva asked if Harry could be talking about Nicolas Flamel. Dumbledore then told them that he had already asked Nicolas who claimed ignorance. None of them knew who Harry's friend was but they were all impressed with his talent.

The class was filing out after the lesson ended when someone bumped into Harry from behind and pressed something into his hand. "Get out of the way Potter!" Blaise said pushing passed, nearly knocking him over in the process.

"Watch yourself snake!" Anthony Goldstein said moving forward only to be stopped by Harry holding up an arm and Kevin Entwhistle grabbing the back of his robes.

"Let it go Tony, it isn't worth it." Harry said watching the snakes walk away before looking down at his hand. "It was a cover to pass a note it seems."

Potter,

Your little stunt all but destroyed Nott's political capital here. Some people are happy about this but Nott isn't. He'll be after your blood now, watch your back.

"Huh," Harry said before crumpling the paper up and throwing it away.

"Well?" Hermione asked.

"Well what?" Harry responded looking confused.

"What did he want?" Tonks said impatiently.

"Oh, it was just a warning." Harry said.

"Like a threat?" Hermione asked concerned. "We should report him if he threatened you."

"We're not reporting anyone Hermione." Harry said. "He said that Nott was going to be coming after me."

"Well, duh." Tonks said. "Who wouldn't come after you for that?"

"That's why I threw it away." Harry said. "It could be a nice, albeit useless, gesture or Blaise might be angeling for something."

A few days later Harry was down at breakfast across from the girls, in pajamas again, when something bumped into his foot. He looked down at the clear glass ball before looking around for Neville real quick. Not spotting him Harry picked the remembrall up and went to set it next to his plate when he saw it fill with red smoke. When he heard footsteps he looked up expecting Neville but saw Susan coming his way instead.

"Hey Susan." Harry called out waving.

"Hey Harry." Susan said as she sat down next to him. "I hope you don't mind but I told my Aunt that we're friends."

"Why would I mind that?" Harry asked. "We are friends aren't we?"

"Oh, of course." Susan said blushing a little. "I just didn't know whether or not you wanted people to know I guess..."

"...Anyway, what did your Aunt say?" Harry asked.

"Oh, right, um, I asked her if she could tell me anything more than the article said about the Black case." Tonks eyes shot up at this and she started listening intently. "She told me that they brought him out of Azkaban yesterday for questioning."

"Is she allowed to talk about an open case like this?" Hermione asked. "It would get you in a lot of trouble in the muggle world."

"So did he say anything important?" Tonks pressed leaning forward.

"Aunty Amy said that he claimed innocence." Susan told her. "He also claimed to be Harry's godfather and demanded to see him."

"Really?" Harry asked excitedly. "Are they going to let me see him?"

"I don't know." Susan said. "Maybe it depends on if his story checks out. You should be watching for a ministry owl though."

"Oh." Harry said looking away from Susan and at Tonks, who looked angry. "Uh, what's wrong Tonks?"

"Nothing." She replied shortly.

"You were happy a few minutes ago, before we started talking about Sirius." Harry said. "Something is wrong."

"Just leave me alone Potter." Tonks said and got up and stormed out.

"What's her problem?" A boy asked from behind Harry.

"AH!" Harry yelled surprised, before turning around. "Oh, Hi Neville."

"Hey." Neville said.

"Oh, is this your remembrall?" Harry asked picking the ball up and watching it fill with smoke again.

"You're forgetting something." Neville said taking his ball back.

"I know I just can't remember what..." Harry trailed off as he looked back to Susan then to the doors where Tonks left. Then his eyes shot open wide. "Oh, I got to go find Tonks."

Harry found Tonks in an alcove off a side hall staring angrily at the floor, hair shifting colors rapidly. She glanced up quickly when she heard him approaching. "What do you want?"

"To apologize." Harry said crouching down in front of her so their heads were level. "I can't believe that I forgot that Sirius is your cousin."

"So you knew?" Tonks said looking up.

"Yea, I just also knew that he is my godfather and I guess I got caught up in that." Harry said.

"It's okay, I'm just glad you knew in the first place." Tonks said.

"What do you mean?" Harry asked.

"It's just that you know all of these little things about Hermione." Tonks said blushing. "I was just upset that you don't seem to know anything about me, not even the big stuff like my famous relatives."

"Oh, well like I said all of that information was incidental." Harry said.
"It isn't like I tried to learn more about Hermione than you."

"I know, but that doesn't help, I don't know why you learned more about her. I don't even know how you learned it!" Tonks said getting angry again. "Why won't you even tell us that?"

"Nick asked me not to." Harry said quietly. "He delivered me information on my noteworthy class mates."

"So I'm not noteworthy but Hermione is?" Tonks asked looking crushed and she started to cry.

"Oh, sweetie, it's nothing like that." Harry said pulling her into a hug.
"Shortly after I met you I demanded to know what the smart, funny, hot metamorph didn't make it onto his list. He said he had never heard of you and that he isn't perfect."

"Really?" Tonks asked hair turning back to its normal pink hue.

"Really." Harry said with a smile.

"And you don't like Hermione more than me?" Tonks asked timidly.

"No I don't like her more than you." Harry reassured earning a big smile and a hug.

"Are you sure there isn't anything you can tell me about Sirius?" Tonks asked before releasing him.

"Since you're family I think I can tell you some. But you can't repeat anything you hear." Harry said and took a deep breath. "Sirius and my father were best friends and while they were here for school they met up with two other boys and named themselves The Marauders..."

Harry told her about their history with Snape and about them becoming animagi, he left out the reason why though. He told her how after graduation Sirius was Harry's Parents' best man, and how James and Lily trusted Sirius more than anyone else. Harry told her the whole story.

"...and then Peter turned into a rat and escaped down into the sewers framing Sirius for everything." Harry finished.

"Wow, how do you know all of that? Nick again?" Tonks asked.

"Yea, he found my mom and dad's journals and I read them." Harry said.

"So do you know what evidence was turned in?" Tonks asked.

"Peter Pettigrew." Harry said with a smile. "In an unbreakable jar with a note."

"Nick?" Tonks asked.

"Yup, but the note was signed anonymously so really really don't tell anyone that part." Harry said.

"Okay, Thanks for telling me." Tonks said smiling at him and giving him another hug. They stood their quietly for a few moments.
"Harry? Shouldn't we be in potions right now?"

"Yea..." Harry said looking around sheepishly. "I think we can count on another detention."

"Aww." Tonks said sadly before quickly smiling. "Then there is no point in showing up late huh?"

The days turned into weeks as the students settled down into their routines. Harry kept going to breakfast unshod in pajamas and Tonks continued to wake him up rudely every day. Hannah and Susan regularly joined the three of them at meal times and the whole group frequented the Gryffindor table. Hermione kept drawing closer and closer to Neville and they had even gone off on their own to get intentionally lost a few times when no one else wanted to.

Theo Nott and his girls kept trying to make trouble for Harry and his but the Slytherins were limited to low level hexes and insults. The scariest moment was when Pansy hit Hermione with a tripping hex while they were on the stairs. Fortunately Harry was able to catch Hermione as she fell and a Prefect saw everything, Pansy ended up in detention for a week. Blaise and Daphne would occasionally nod or smile at Harry, but other than them the Slytherins were coldly indifferent or mildly hostile towards Harry, but none of them directly did anything.

The Daily Prophet had a big day when Andy Smudgley wrote an article revealing that Sirius had never had a trial. A few days later the Ministry announced that Sirius' trial would be held in late January. Tonks was growing frustrated with how long everything was taking and both she and Harry were let down when they received word that Minister Fudge had denied Sirius a visit with Harry until after the trial.

Halloween arrived and after classes were done for the day Hermione excused herself saying that she had a errand to run and would meet up with them at the feast. Harry and Tonks relented and went up to Ravenclaw tower to drop off their school stuff and hung out for a while before heading down to the feast. When they didn't find Hermione there they got nervous.

"I'm going to go look for her." Tonks said. "What if Nott got her."

"I'll go with you." Harry said standing when Tonks did.

"No you stay in case we just miss each other. We wouldn't want her to go looking for us too. If I don't find her in fifteen minutes I'll come back." Tonks said as she walked away.

Twenty-five minutes later Harry was showing how worried he was when Tonks came back in. "She is okay. She asked Neville out and got shot down, he said he is too young or some nonsense like that."

"So she took it bad." Harry asked.

"Yea, she'll be fine though. I talked to her for a while then she told me to come eat, that she wasn't hungry and just wanted to be alone for a while." Tonks said.

"Where is she?" Harry asked.

"Crying in a bathroom." Tonks said as she picked up a roll. "Why?"

"Shit." Harry said just before Professor Quirrell came running into the Hall.

"TROLL!" Quirrell yelled. "In the dungeons. Thought you should know."

Harry watched Quirrell pretend to pass out. He had been intending to follow Quirrell this time but it looked like he would be saving Hermione again. With a sigh he joined the crowd of students leaving and when they were out the doors he dragged Tonks off to the side. "Hermione doesn't know about the troll. We have to get her."

"This way." Tonks said and led Harry through the castle.

Harry realized that Hermione was in a different bathroom this time and let out a small sigh of relief. Then they heard the scream. Harry and Tonks picked up their pace and rounded a corner as they heard another scream and saw the troll walk into the girls bathroom.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck" Harry said as he ran into the bathroom and drew his wand. He shot off a few stinging hexes to get its attention, which worked. The troll rounded on Harry and swung his club catching Harry in the left arm and throwing him into a wall.

"HARRY!" Hermione yelled as the troll brought his club up to finish Harry off. Just then Tonks threw a piece of a sink hitting the troll in the ear.

Harry regained consciousness as the troll spun on its heel, club still raised. He took a breath Broken arm, broken rib, broken rib, concussion. Not bad. Shit! He thought just before the troll started to swing his club down. Harry could only think of one thing to do and leveled his wand at the troll's back.

"ACCIO CLUB!" Harry shouted and heard a sickening crunch before passing out again.

Even though this Harry Potter had never been there before the memories of the old Harry Potter were sufficient to ensure that he didn't even need a moment's thought to recognize the Hospital Wing when he woke up there. He sat up and rubbed his eyes wincing at the pain in his side. "Unngh, did anyone get the plates of that lorry?"

"Harry!" Hermione squeaked and ran over. "Are you okay?"

"I feel like I got hit with by a bus...there was a troll right?" Harry asked memory cloudy.

"Yea, you and Tonks came and saved me." Hermione said smiling at him.

"Tonks! What happened to Tonks? Did she get hit? The troll was about to kill her!" Harry asked panicked.

"I'm over here Harry." Tonks called from behind a curtain. "Just hurt my ankle."

"Mr. Potter. Good to see you awake." Madam Pomfrey said coming into view. "It is a miracle you're alive. These girls said that you got clubbed by a troll. Three broken ribs and two breaks in your arm."

"Three ribs? I only remember two breaking. Huh." Harry said bewildered. "I think I got a concussion too."

"You did, and you still got off light, a full grown mountain troll and only a few broken bones." She said while casting diagnostic charms. "You should be thanking Merlin you're still alive."

"Yes, you said that already." Harry said. "How long til I can go?"

"Impatient. Just like your father." Pomfrey said handing him a potion. "He was always trying to leave too. You'll be free to go as soon as you talk to the Headmaster. That potion will take care of the concussion and some of the residual ache."

Pomfrey bustled around a little while longer and opened the curtain between him and Tonks. Harry looked Tonks in the eye and smiled. "So what happened after I got hit?"

"We would like to hear the story too." Dumbledore said as he walked into the room with McGonagall and Flitwick behind him.

A few minutes later the story was recounted, evidently when Harry summoned the club he put too much effort into his spell and the club ended up buried in the trolls chest, killing it quickly. Dumbledore was smiling by the end of the tale. "Harry I know you don't accept house points so instead I would like to present you and Ms. Tonks a pass on a detention of your choosing in the future."

"Brilliant, thank you Professor." Harry said smiling.

"Yea, thank you Professor." Tonks parroted with a giant grin.

"Unless there are any questions I think we can wrap this up and get you three back up to your dorms." Dumbledore said watching the children shake their heads.

"I have a question Albus." McGonagall spoke up and turned to look at Harry. "Mr. Potter, could you please tell us how you managed to know a fourth year charm?"

"Uh..." Harry said feeling the panic rising again.

Disclaimer: Own

"I have a question Albus." McGonagall spoke up and turned to look at Harry. "Mr. Potter, could you please tell us how you managed to know a fourth year charm?"

"Uh..." Harry said feeling the panic rising again. He quickly switched over to a cocky grin and shrugged. "I'm just cool like that?"

McGonagall looked thoroughly displeased with his answer. Tonks however was openly laughing, Hermione soon joined her with a giggle.

"A real answer would be nice Mr. Potter." McGonagall said tersely.

"Who cares?" Tonks butted in loudly. "I'm just glad he knows it."

"Indeed Ms. Tonks." Dumbledore said with a genial smile. "Minerva, it is clear that Harry learned it somewhere, I would assume this Nick fellow had something to do with it."

Harry was starting to get creeped out by the headmaster. The other Albus would have been trying to use legilimency on Harry by now. This one didn't seem to actively drag information out of people. This one needed to be watched more carefully.

"Assume all you want Headmaster." Harry said carefully.

"Are you saying Nick had no part in this?" McGonagall asked disbelieving.

"Are you saying that it was a foregone conclusion, why did you ask then?" Harry asked.

"Confirmation is comforting." McGonagall said with a victorious smirk.

"Satisfied then?" Harry asked. "It is getting late."

"Yes Mr. Potter." McGonagall said turning her eyes to Flitwick and Dumbledore. "I'll leave the students in your hands, like he said it is getting late."

"Goodnight Minerva." Dumbledore bid farewell as she left. "Now Harry, you and Nick should be careful. It is illegal to train someone in magic without having a license and it is equally illegal to have a wand before you turn eleven."

"You're correct sir." Harry said evenly. "In the UK."

"What are you saying?" Flitwick asked.

"Just that there are more possibilities than just me being a criminal." Harry said. "Can we go now?"

"Yes Mr. Potter. Filius, I trust you know the way." Dumbledore said walking away. "Goodnight everyone."

"Goodnight Professor." The three children chorused.

HPCOC

"Mr. Potter. Can I have a word?" Professor Flitwick asked as the girls climbed into Ravenclaw Tower.

"Alright." Harry said and allowed the portrait to swing closed.
"What's gotcha down Professor?"

"I just want you to know that even if you can't talk about things in front of your friends you can always come talk to us Professors." Flitwick said after a moment of confusion over Harry's phrase.

"I wasn't not talking in front of them. I was not talking in front of Dumbledore." Harry said.

"Is there something you would like to share?" Flitwick asked.

"Not with you. Sorry." Harry said sadly.

"You can trust us you know." Flitwick said reassuringly. "We aren't looking to harm you."

"Be that as it may, I have no reason to trust you." Harry said. "Being a Professor doesn't change anything in my book."

"I don't like it but I can't force you to trust me." Flitwick said with a sigh. "Just know that my door is always open if you need it."

"Thank you Professor. Goodnight." Harry said turning back to the portrait.

"Goodnight Mr. Potter." Filius said and walked away.

HPCOC

"If you weren't in the UK where were you?" Hermione asked quickly when Harry came into the common room. "How long have you been training? Do you think Nick will teach us too? Could you ask? Please?"

"Hermione, I have never left the UK." Harry said. "And Nick didn't train me. I'm going to bed though. Goodnight girls."

"Harry wait!" Hermione cried after a moment of silence.

"What?"

"Why did you lie to the Professors then?" Hermione asked. "You shouldn't lie."

"I didn't lie." Harry said before starting to make his way up the stairs again.

"But you said-" Hermione started.

"Let it go Hermione." Harry said.

"Hmrpf." Hermione huffed as she watched the black haired boy disappear up the stairs.

"He really didn't say anything." Tonks said.

"Don't be silly. He told everyone that Nick taught him outside the country." Hermione replied.

"No, Hermione, he didn't." Tonks said. "Think about his words without the connotation."

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked.

"He didn't make any claims." Tonks said. "He just didn't correct their claims."

"But he told McGonagall she was correct." Hermione said sounding confused. "You could see it on her face, she clearly got the answer she was looking for."

"She thinks she did, but Harry didn't confirm anything." Tonks said. "He is really more Slytherin than anyone gives him credit for."

"But, how didn't the headmaster catch on?" Hermione asked after a pensive moment. "He didn't press on anything."

"Who knows."

HPCOC

Minerva McGonagall was pleased. She might not have come any closer to finding out who 'Nick' was but at least now she knew some of what he was doing. There had to be some legal issues with taking a minor out of the country without the permission of the child's magical guardian. Albus would probably use that to coerce Nick's identity out of Harry.

Reasonably assured that the mystery around Harry Potter would soon be unveiled Minerva turned her attentions to finding a way to test just how much Nick taught Harry.

HPCOC

Albus Dumbledore was furious. Not only had Harry said nothing of any relevance but he implied that he left the Dursleys. This was impossible, at least impossible without Albus knowing. All of my instruments are working. Albus thought as his eyes fell on a shelf of whirling and puffing devices. Well except for those two that stopped within a day of leaving Harry on the stoop.

Albus' eyes widened at the implication. What if that was Nick making his first appearance in Harry's life? I need to go see which charms failed.

HPCOC

Filius Flitwick was forlorn. He had never contemplated being mistrusted by one of his students. It hurt even more that it was a student from his house.

It's only natural though I suppose. He thought as he opened a bottle of goblin wine. I don't trust everyone I meet, why should he?

The short professor had finished the bottle and was drunkenly drifting off to sleep when his real question crossed his mind. Why do I feel like I owe him something?

HPCOC

Petunia Dursley was enjoying her calm Friday morning, her darling son was off showing up his class mates and her husband of many years was at work supporting the family. Petunia herself was standing at the front window with a cup of tea. She almost dropped her cup, which would have ruined the carpeting, when an old man suddenly popped into existence on the sidewalk.

I thought I told him to leave us alone. Petunia said taking her cup back into the kitchen and preparing herself to deal with Dumbledore. She walked back to the front window and watched the man, expecting him to approach the front door. As she watched she could see him going from determined to irritated to outright angry.

"WHERE ARE THOSE BLOODY STONES?" She heard Albus scream outside, his face a pleasant shade of Vernon Puce.

Petunia threw open the front door. "Could you please stop making a spectacle of yourself?"

"Petunia, thank Merlin. Look I need you to look around the premises and find any rocks you can with strange markings carved into them." Albus said desperately.

"Why can't you get them yourself?" Petunia demanded.

"They are maintaining a barrier that is preventing me from entering the property." Albus said. "The stones will be about fist sized."

"So you're saying that there is something here that is preventing you from being here too? And you want me to help you get rid of them? Really?" Petunia asked and turned to go back inside. "Good day Professor."

"Wait, Petunia please, I think whomever placed the stones did something to the protections I placed." Albus said. When she didn't stop walking he added to his statement. "Can you at least tell me if Harry has been consorting with anyone called 'Nick'?"

"I'm sorry Professor, I don't know what you're talking about." Petunia said with a smirk before going inside and shutting the door. Once she was inside she leaned her back against the door. I don't know what happened but anything that keeps that man away from my Dudders is a blessing.

HPCOC

She knows something. Albus thought as he walked up the path to the castle. She has to have met him, there is no way that Harry could have gotten enough training to summon without her noticing. And she claimed ignorance exactly how Harry and his girls do when they know exactly what's going on.

He truly wished that he could forget about all of this Nick business but the mystery man had shown that he has access to the grounds. Albus didn't think that Nick was a threat, but he had plans for Harry and couldn't allow interference. Harry had to be under Albus' control by the time Voldemort came back or there would be no one to guide Harry to their destined confrontation.

There is just nothing to do about it. I need to get Harry up here for a private meeting and take the information I need. Albus thought distastefully. If that doesn't work I guess my only option is to get the Dursleys away from their home and get the information from them.

HPCOC

"Good morning and welcome to the first match of the Quidditch season. Today facing off are the sneaky snakes of Slytherin and the proud lions of Gryffindor."

Harry stopped listening to Lee Jordan at this point. This match was very nostalgic for Harry, after all this is the first team he ever played the game with. Not that he was part of the team now, but he could cheer for them whenever they weren't facing Ravenclaw though.

As Harry watched the game he found himself cheering as hard as he could for the Gryffindors. His promise to the Sorting Hat encouraged him to cheer for the Slytherins too, which he did whenever they weren't breaking the rules, which is to say, not a lot.

The Slytherins were ahead by 60 points when Harry remembered that this was the match when Quirrell tried to kill him by bewitching his broom. A cursory glance to Quirrell and reassuring himself that while he was standing on his own feet he wouldn't have to worry about a broom curse. Harry sat back and closed his eyes, taking in the noise of the crowd and listening to the commentary. He almost felt like he was flying himself when suddenly Tonks screamed Harry's name and knocked him off his seat.

"What the-" Harry yelled as he fell, as he hit the ground he heard the seat he was on break in half. "-hell?"

Harry rolled onto his back and opened his eyes and watched as the bludger above him reversed direction and came flying at his head again. Harry rolled out of the way just before he lost his head. Where is Dobby? And why is he acting this year?

The bludger was returning again and this time Harry couldn't move. Fortunately the bludger was heading for his stomach and not his head. Harry's body reacted automatically and closed his arms around the bludger holding it to himself. This didn't prevent all of the air from being knocked out of Harry's lungs though, it didn't help that he was losing the fight not to throw up either. When he lost that fight and lost his breakfast he also lost his grip on the bludger. As it drew back for yet another attempt of Harry's life it was hit with a beam of white light, shattering it into a million pieces.

"Are you alright?" Flitwick asked the barely conscious, wheezing and heaving form of Harry Potter. "Er, never mind, let's just get you up to Madam Pomfrey."

HPCOC

"Really, they should just get rid of the sport." Harry woke up to hear Madam Pomfrey saying. "It is bad enough that I have to pick up the pieces of the players, but now the spectators too?"

"That's what makes it exciting." Harry said painfully alerting her to his consciousness.

"Mr. Potter, you were only out for a few minutes this time." Madam Pomfrey said smiling. "Your friends will be here soon, they're talking to Professor Flitwick about what happened."

"That's nice, but do you have a nausea potion?" Harry asked shooting the potion down quickly when she handed it to him.

"Since this is the second time in two weeks that you have ended up in here I will be forced to express that I will be most displeased if you live up to your father's medical file." Pomfrey said as she gave him the rest of the potions and did a few quick scans. "You're free to leave whenever you feel up to standing."

"Thank you." Harry said shakily getting to his feet.

"I didn't think it'd be now...like father like son I guess." Pomfrey said with a sad but joking smile. "He didn't like me enough to stick around either."

"Oh, come off it Poppy." Her eyes went wide at her first name. "We all love you, it's just that hospitals make me feel like I'm about to die."

"Are you going to wait for the girls at least?" Poppy asked.

"No, they can find me in the common room." Harry said walking out. "Be a dear and tell them where I went though if you will."

HPCOC

"Professor Dumbledore wasn't pleased that you had already left, Harry." Hermione said when the girls finally caught up to them in the common room.

"What did he want?" Harry asked.

"I don't know, he just said he had some private matters to discuss with you in private." Tonks said. "Is it fishy when people say private twice like that?"

"Not always, but from Dumbledore certainly." Harry said.

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked.

"I think he is plotting something, I just don't have any proof yet." Harry said.

"You don't think he had anything to do with this do you?" Hermione asked. "That is a serious thing to accuse someone of."

"No I don't think so," Harry said. "his goal seems to be keeping me safe at the moment, but there is something more."

"Good, because we have our own theory." Hermione said.

"We brought it up to the headmaster, but he just brushed it off." Tonks added.

"He'll do that." Harry said before asking the question that he had to even though he knew what they were about to say. "So who do you think did it?"

"Snape." The girls said together.

Disclaimer: Potterverse

AN: I was wanting to publish this on Saturday March 19th but there was an issue with FFN. Nazran suggested a solution that worked! Nazran I love you, PM me if you want a cameo or something.

"Snape." The girls said together.

"Hmm, explain your reasoning?" Harry replied.

"You mean it isn't obvious?" Tonks asked.

"It is and that's the problem. Snape is a Slytherin, they pride themselves on being inconspicuous." Harry said. "He would never attack me in front of the whole school."

"Not true." Hermione fired back. "We think he was trying to make an example of you. Sort of an 'If you rouse rabble you'll be dealt with wherever and whenever.' kind of thing."

"That might be the message," Harry conceded. "but I don't think Snape is that stupid."

"Well if it isn't him, then who did it?" Tonks asked. "Our only other suspects were Nott, Davis and Puginson."

"We ruled them out for lack of skill." Hermione added. "How many people have you offended?"

"Probably all of the prefects, heads, Filch, Snape of course, Dumbledore maybe and anyone who respects professors above all." Harry said with a smirk.

"You've been busy." Tonks said approvingly.

"By 'respect professors above all' do you mean 'respect professors more than me'?" Hermione asked arms crossed.

"No, not at all." Harry said. "I mean the people who hold professors above themselves merely because they are a professor. People like Percy Weasley."

"So you think he set the bludger on you?" Tonks asked.

"No, I think it was Quirrell." Harry said with a shrug. "Something has been bugging me about that guy since day one."

"A feeling isn't enough to accuse someone on." Hermione said.

"Which is why I haven't." Harry said. "I haven't done anything worse in that regard than you two have with Snape."

"So what should we do?" Hermione asked.

"Watch them both?" Harry said. "Harry Potter secret number two can help."

"What's Harry Potter secret number two?" Hermione asked.

"That sounds worse when you hear it. I need a new name." Harry said. "But anyway it is upstairs. Come on."

"Tonks! Harry's taking us up to his room to show us his secret." Hermione said giggling. "What do you suppose that means?"

"Hermione! Good try." Tonks said grinning. "It was a bit wordy though, I hadn't thought of anything better though."

"Too true." Harry said, laughing, as they entered the staircase. "We'll turn you into an accomplished flirt yet."

"Ooo I got a better one:" Hermione said excitedly. "So Tonks, do you think he'll insist on seeing our secrets after he's shown us his?"

Tonks was laughing. "Good good. You just need to work on your sultry voice and timing."

"Just don't forget about the boundaries." Harry said. "Flirting can border on sexual harassment, bullying and foreplay. It is important not to accidentally cross any of those lines."

"But you're a girl so you only really have to worry about the bullying aspect." Tonks said. "Guys don't really complain about the other two. Do you Harry?"

"Huh?" Harry asked bewildered and trying to figure out what Tonks did to/with him that counted as sexual harassment or foreplay.

"Tonks!" Hermione admonished.

"Hang on, wait til he figures it out." Tonks said.

"Oh, you were joking." Harry said flatly.

"Well you don't have to sound so disappointed about it." Tonks laughed. "But point proven, guys don't respond negatively to over flirting. Although that causes concerns for an entirely different reason if you aren't selective in whom you flirt with."

"Oh, look we're here and have a convenient excuse to stop talking about this." Harry said. "It is rapidly approaching inappropriate."

"So what was Harry Potter secret number 1?" Hermione asked.

"Why not call them hops? Drop the o and it is an acronym." Tonks asked.

"Sounds good." Harry said absently as he dug down to his secret stuff section of his trunk.

"Hops one was that Harry knows the castle really well already, it was revealed when we went down to duel Nott. Or rather willingly walk into Nott's trap." Tonks told Hermione.

"That's it?" Hermione asked. "Boring."

"Hey! Don't worry, this one is much better." Harry said withdrawing his top half from his trunk holding the Marauder's Map in his hand. "This is the single best device for monitoring activities within Hogwarts grounds."

"A piece of parchment?" Tonks asked.

"No Nymmy, it's what's on the parchment." Harry said. "A relic from the days of my father and his friends, including Sirius."

"But it's blank." Hermione said as he unfolded it. "Is this like clothes you can't see unless you're good at your job?"

"Exactly like that." Harry said looking her in the eye while quietly tapping the map with his wand. "I solemnly swear I am up to no good."

"Harry this is amazing!" Hermione said as she watched the map finish filling in.

"It shows everyone exactly where they are at all times through all forms of concealment." Harry said. "It is never wrong and it's one of a kind."

"Where can I get one?" Tonks asked awed.

"I was planning on giving this one back to Sirius and Remus this summer once he's a free man. They made it, it belongs to them." Harry said watching both faces fall. "But that is only because I plan on asking them to help me in making a new version. I suppose I could coerce them into making three instead of one."

Hermione beamed at him and Tonks threw herself at him knocking him over and hugging him hard. She quickly stood up and blushed prettily at him. In the moment that followed all three met each others' eyes and the next few minutes were spent laughing.

"If you tell me when your birthdays are I can try to arrange to make them birthday gifts." Harry said smiling.

"September 19th." Hermione said quickly.

"August 1st."

"Really?" Harry asked looking at Tonks. "Your's is right after mine."

"More so than you know. According to my mum she and your mum went into labor at the same time." Tonks said. "Her theory is that I intentionally delayed my departure to spite her. I am reasonably sure that she is joking though. She insists on telling me the story every time a new Harry Potter Novel is published."

"Harry Potter Novels?" Hermione asked incredulously, looking at Harry.

"Complete works of fiction that I plan on suing the publishers over as soon as I get a sympathetic guardian." Harry said.

"They're entertaining though." Tonks said. "Did you know that Harry fought off a dragon army single handedly when he was 6."

Harry groaned when he heard this. "There was only one and I was eight."

"WHAT?" Tonks shrieked.

"Relax Nym, I was joking." Harry said rolling his eyes. "Not that I couldn't have if the opportunity presented itself."

"Of course Harry." Hermione said with her own eye roll. "So Tonks, is there any way that I could get a copy of those books?"

"Why do you want to read that garbage?" Harry demanded.

"To tease you about of course." Hermione said. "Can I start with the dragon one?"

"Sure, I have the whole works in my trunk, I'll give them to you later." Tonks said smiling.

"Thanks!" Hermione said.

"Why do you have the complete works here Nym?" Harry asked.

"Two reasons. First because they are a good guilty pleasure read late at night in bed." Tonks said. "And second is because I plan to have you sign them at some point."

"So I am the last thing you think about before going to sleep?" Harry asked causing Tonks to blush. "And no signatures, people might think I'm like Fraud Lockhart."

"Who?" Hermione asked.

"Gilderoy Lockhart." Harry said. "Listens to other peoples' stories of heroics, then obliterates them and publishes the story as his own exploits."

"Why do you say that Harry?" Tonks asked. "A lot of people swear by his books."

"If you ever have the misfortune of reading his books chart the dates and events and see for yourself. I believe he was fighting a banshee to death on a day that he spent in isolated silent meditation while he was preparing to exorcise a wraith, on the other side of the planet." Harry said.

"Couldn't they have just changed dates for literary flow?" Hermione asked.

"Theoretically I guess." Harry said.

"If he were a fraud I would expect that he would at least have an editor that would take care of catching these things." Hermione continued. "That is their job after all."

"What if his editor is just incompetent?"

"Occam's Razor gives the advantage to me. Your theory assumes that Lockhart is a multiple offense felon and an idiot for picking a bad editor." Hermione replied.

"That doesn't mean I'm wrong." Harry said.

"Have you even read his books?" Hermione asked accusingly.

"Yes, have you?" Harry fired back.

"Why are we arguing about Lockhart?" Tonks interjected. "Seriously, not important."

"True, Sorry I got worked up Hermione." Harry said.

"Me too."

"There all better." Tonks said smirking. "So how much time do you propose we use to monitor our two notorious noteworthy professors?"

"I was planning on keeping it on me and watching Quirrell constantly, and when the three of us are together in private I can bring it out and

"we can watch them both while we do homework or whatever." Harry said.

"That isn't very comprehensive Harry." Hermione said. "If we network with other houses and years we could get constant monitoring on both of them."

"But that would require telling people about the map and giving them incentives to help." Harry said. "I don't want people to know about the map, it is a hops after all, and I don't have the resources to give incentives."

"Understandable." Tonks said. "Your way it is."

"Thank you."

"So if 'hops' is singular what is the plural form?" Hermione asked.

HPCOC

The weeks of November slipped by quickly for Harry and his girls. Surprisingly Dumbledore hadn't made an excuse to get Harry alone yet. Harry was sure that he would try legilimency as soon as he got the chance and was avoiding the Headmaster like the plague. Professor watching turned out to be a very boring pass time. Quirrell never was anywhere other than his class room, office, bedroom and Great Hall. Snape wasn't much better, he spent some time in the Slytherin common room and patrolling the halls, but never staying very long near the third floor corridor. They eventually stopped watching the map except for during prime times.

When December arrived sign up sheets to stay over the holidays appeared in all the common rooms. When Harry noticed he quickly and quietly signed his name and went about his day.

"You don't have to stay here Harry." Tonks told him a few days later. "I owled my mum when I saw your name on the list. She said to invite you, and that no one should be alone during the holidays."

"That was really sweet Nym." Harry said. "But I am going to have to pass. I don't plan on staying here anyway."

"Then why did you say you were?" Tonks asked.

"Because I'm not riding the train nor am I going to my relatives', I will be here enough to make appearances, meal time, sleep etc." Harry said. "Generally easier to tell them that I'm not leaving."

"But Dumbledore has a better chance of cornering you here when there aren't as many students." Hermione said. "You might get forced into that confrontation."

"Blah, Oh well. If it happens it happens." Harry said with great resignation.

"Wait so you're only using this as a base of operation over the break?" Hermione asked. "Does it matter where you start from?"

"Not really, I'm just trying to avoid questions." Harry said. "I have top secret errands to run and I don't want to spread any more information than I have to."

"Can you tell us what your errands are?" Tonks asked clearly curious.

"One of them is Christmas shopping." Harry said. "Two is going to the Department of Mysteries, there is a rumor of a prophecy about me that I want to check out. I can't talk about three four or five but one of the three will probably leave me magically exhausted. I think I need a house elf too."

"What do you need a house elf for?" Hermione asked.

"I want to send Sirius a gourmet Christmas dinner since he isn't free yet, but I'm not that good of a cook and I don't know how he would appreciate a vegetarian meal right now." Harry said. "Also elves are super useful."

"There are probably a few still alive connected to the Potter estates." Tonks supplied helpfully. "You've only been gone ten years, except for the very old there shouldn't be any permanent damage to them due to the bond."

"What does that mean?" Hermione asked sounding slightly worried.

"When the master of a house elf dies they are bound to the heir, and if that bond isn't re-established eventually the elves will lose their minds and die, just like freed elves." Tonks said. "Takes a while though."

"How do you even know Harry's parents had elves?" Hermione asked.

"When I become a legal adult I will own Potter Manor here in Britain, but also a villa near Paris and a property on the Mediterranean in Sicily." Harry said. "Without elves they would all have fallen apart by now."

"Wow, have you been to any of them?" Hermione asked.

"Er, no, until I own them I won't technically know where they are." Harry said. "Fidelius Familia."

"What's that?" Hermione asked.

"It is a spell that hides a property from everyone who isn't in the family of the caster." Harry said. "Unless the head of the family gives them the location."

"When one head passes on the secret goes to the next when they come of age. Harry won't have access until he's seventeen." Tonks said.

"Oh." Hermione said.

"So, if I can get my parents to promise not to interfere or ask questions can you come?" Tonks asked.

"Add a oath of silence and I'll think about it." Harry said.

"I don't think they'll go for that, but I'll send an owl in the morning." Tonks said.

"Understandable. I probably wouldn't without knowing me first either." Harry replied.

"So, we know we're getting maps for our birthdays. Wanna tell us what Christmas brings?" Tonks asked.

"That isn't happening Nym." Harry said smiling.

"Aww."

HPCOC

The morning of the students' departure from Hogwart's came. Hermione and Tonks woke Harry up early to spend extra time hanging out since they wouldn't be seeing each other at all until January. The girls were horrified when they heard that Harry never really celebrated before, so they decided to cram as many approximations of their traditions into this last morning as they could. It was hectic and wouldn't have been possible without the help of the Hogwart's elves.

He was woken up at five in the morning as both girls jumped on him. Harry opened his eyes and regarded his friends with a certain amount of loathing. "Morning."

"Happy Christmas Harry." Both girls said together cheerily, of course.

"So what's first on our agenda?" Harry asked sliding out from underneath them and out of bed.

"First you put a shirt on." Hermione said.

"What if I just want to wear a warming charm instead?" Harry asked as he started shuffling through his drawer.

"Then you would get in a lot of trouble as soon as we left the common room." Hermione said one eyebrow raised. "What did you think would happen?"

"Dunno, too early to think." Harry replied pulling a shirt on backwards.

"I can see that." Tonks said as she moved over to help him get his shirt on right. "Wear shoes today too."

"Ugh, shoes suck." Harry complained. "Do I have to?"

"We aren't going to have the time to come back up here before we go." Hermione said.

"But you're not leaving for six hours." Harry said.

"And we have to get through breakfast, playing in the snow, morning tea and cuddle time." Hermione said.

"Cuddle time?" Harry asked.

"Like we said. All of our Christmas traditions that we can fit." Tonks said.

"Weird. Oh well, I'll go with it." Harry said as he finished tying his second shoe on. "Off to the Great Hall then?"

"No, kitchens." Tonks said. "Christmas breakfast is with only the family."

"Alright, lead on." Harry said.

HPCOC

Hermione and Tonks practically force fed Harry mountains of pancakes, waffles, eggs, oatmeal and several other breakfast dishes that don't normally grace his breakfast plate. Harry wasn't sure it was healthy, but felt bad dampening their enthusiasm. Two and a half hours later a visibly chubbier Harry was once again being dragged through the castle and out the front doors.

The three of them built themselves as snow people and then started on the rest of the staff. Because of how public the location was they decided to stay tasteful, and with magic they were able to get fairly close to life like. They did however sculpt Snape and Quirrell to be mid way through a game of rock-paper-scissors, the undecided winner being the one who is trying to kill Harry. The Weasleys joined them part way through and added their family to the growing collection. Harry was glad the whole school was going home or there would be no snow left on the grounds after everyone made their families.

The snowman building soon turned into a magical snowball fight. Ron and the Twins versus Harry and the Girls, the showdown of the

century, or so they joked. It turned one sided when Harry taught the girls a charm to make their snowballs fly around corners, making the Weasley fortifications obsolete. With some significant muttering about family honor and idiots Percy joined the fray. Soon all seven were red faced, cold and laughing. Hagrid joined in for a while but his snowballs were the size of basketballs and knocked over whomever they hit, so he only threw a few and left after only a few minutes, the novelty having worn off.

At nine thirty the girls called a truce and excused themselves and Harry, taking him back inside. They each grabbed one of his hands and led him down several corridors to an unused classroom. There was a large blanket in one corner along with an even bigger pile of cushions and a portrait.

"What's all this?" Harry asked.

"The cuddle corner and a guest story teller." Tonks said. "This is Circe, she's Greek and she has a story about pigs to tell us."

"Nice to meet you Circe." Harry said with a small bow before turning back to Tonks. "I thought tea came first."

"It does, but there is no border between the two." Tonks said.
"Dolly!"

A small house elf popped into the room with a crack. "Yes, ma'am?"

"Could you please bring the tea now?" Tonks asked.

"Of course ma'am." Dolly said and retrieved the tea with two quick cracks. "Do you need anything else ma'am?"

"No thank you." Tonks said. "I really appreciate this."

"Me too Dolly!" Hermione said. "You're great."

"Thank you." Harry said smiling at the little lady. Dolly beamed at them all and curtsied before popping away to her next task.

After a few minutes of rearranging the three of them made suitable seating out of the cushions. Pulling the blanket over them they got their tea and settled in. Hermione ended up sitting on his right and

just barely touching his shoulder, Tonks was on his left and was leaning on him heavily. A half hour later his tea was done and there was no feeling in his left arm. The story sounded like there was at least another forty minutes or so to go. Pulling his arm out from where it was pinned by Tonks, he flexed his fingers a few times to re-establish blood flow. Not wanting to stick his arm back into that trap he laid it across the cushions supporting Tonks' back. He missed her triumphant smirk as she snuggled closer and laid her head on his shoulder. A few minutes later a beet red Hermione mimicked Tonks on his right, Circe had to take a moment to stop laughing when she saw Harry's face, much to his chagrin.

Circe had finished her story and was chatting with the children when Dolly popped back in. "Ma'ams and sir, the carriages will be leaving in a few minutes."

"Thank you Dolly." Harry said, disentangling himself from the girls and standing up quickly. He turned and offered each girl a hand up and the three of them settled their robes before saying goodbye to Circe and leaving.

After walking down the hall in silence for a few moments Tonks broke the silence. "That was fun."

"Yea." Hermione agreed.

"So which one of your families did that tradition come from?" Harry asked.

"Not mine." Tonks said drawing an indignant sputter from Hermione.

"But you pitched the idea to me." Hermione said. "Tonks, this was supposed to be about sharing our traditions with Harry."

"It was, but all traditions have an origin point don't they?" Tonks said.

"Well, yes I guess." Hermione conceded.

"Then consider this the first annual Christmas snufflefest." Tonks said grinning.

"Do we have to wait for Christmas to do that again?" Hermione asked causing Harry to blush.

"Alright Hermione!" Tonks exclaimed. "You made a metamorph blush!"

"Shut up." Harry said dejectedly. "Oh, look, the line. I guess we should say goodbye here then don't you?"

"Not so fast mister." Tonks said firmly. "We still have a few minutes left to tease you mercilessly."

"Maybe I'll just walk away without saying bye then."

"You can't do that." Hermione replied.

"Oh, and why is that?" Harry asked.

"Because we've got your arms." Hermione said.

"Huh?" Harry asked as the girls closed the distance and hugged his arms tightly to them. "Oh."

"So Harry." Tonks started. "Were you blushing because Hermione wants to cuddle with you again or because you were secretly wondering when you would get to cuddle with her again?"

"I don't think that's it at all Tonks." Hermione said while Harry resolutely looked straight ahead. "I think he was wondering when he would get to cuddle with you again."

A few minutes later Professor Flitwick announced that it was time to go. The girls wished him a happy Christmas one more time and each gave him a quick kiss on the cheek before releasing his arms and quickly walking out the doors.

"You're getting good at flirting." Tonks said as they climbed into a carriage.

"Only with Harry though." Hermione admitted. "I would be way too nervous to flirt with anyone else."

"That's fine, we all start somewhere." Tonks said smiling. "Think he's going to miss us?"

"He'd better." Hermione said sternly and then they both broke into giggles.

Disclaimer: I really don't like these, you all know I don't own what I don't own, and I'll never claim to own them. This is my last disclaimer, deal with it.

AN: Now that that's out of the way. Nazran shared the credit with three others: mbshadow, MKterra and NeonZangetsu. Where ever you are readers, stand up and give all four of them a round of applause, if anyone questions you just tell them that the computer ordered you to. And on to what you're here for.

HPCOC

Harry watched as the carriages made their way down to Hogsmeade. He stood on the front stairs until he heard the train pull away. With a sigh he turned back to the castle. I'm going to miss them.

Something Tonks said was rattling around Harry's head as he meandered his way up to the seventh floor. Harry paced back and forth needing a large empty room, the room of requirements was more than happy to oblige. Harry entered and was surprised to find that the room wasn't completely empty, there was a raised platform at one end. Harry made his way over and stood on the platform, with a final look at the otherwise empty room he called out. "Potter elves! I require your presence."

Harry didn't know what to expect. Last time all of the elves were long dead when he discovered his properties, just another feat of meddling by Dumbledore. Harry's highest estimate was that he would have around ten elves. He was way wrong. Harry's ears popped from the sudden pressure change when 137 proud, clean and uniformed elves appeared. Harry's eyes bugged out. "Wow there are a lot of you!"

"Is Master Harry ready to renew the bond?" Asked one elf timidly, Harry noticed there was an extra adornment on his uniform.

"I am, are you the head elf then?" Harry asked.

"Yes Master, my name is Marny." The elf said bowing.

"Nice to meet you Marny." Harry said smiling. "Now then, how do I renew this bond?"

The process was simple only requiring a couple drops of blood and an oath from the elf being bonded. Performing the ceremony 137 times though left Harry light headed. When he was finally done Harry laid down on the floor and closed his eyes. "Could one of you please get me a blood replenishing potion, and an iron supplement if you can find one?"

A few moments later a bottle was placed in his hand along with a small white pill. Harry swallowed the pill and potion without a moment's pause. He sat back up now that he wasn't in threat of passing out and regarded his elves. "Alright then, for now I need to speak with Marny and all of my cooks. The rest of you can go back to what you were doing. Wait, I'd like a status report on all my properties as well, so a representative of each one should stay too. The rest of you are dismissed."

Harry's ears popped again when the pressure suddenly dropped as 122 house elves suddenly vanished. Harry turned to the remaining fifteen. "Reports first I suppose. Starting with Potter Manor."

"The Manor is in excellent condition Master, the plumbing may need to be updated within a few years though." One elf said stepping forward.

"That's what I forgot. Please none of you call me 'Master' I'm either Harry or Sir." Harry said, conjuring a piece of parchment and began writing. "I'm not angry don't worry, spread the word to the others when you head back. Don't let any of the plumbing fail before you replace it. I'll send a letter with you to get the needed funds out of Gringott's. I might be summering there, I'm not sure yet though. If you have nothing else to report you may go."

"Yes sir." The elf said and left with a pop. The Sicilian property was in a similar state and that elf was dismissed quickly. Harry's surprise came from the last report. In this universe it seems that he has a menagerie, or had at least, the elf reported that most of the animals had died over the years and weren't replaced. Harry told her not to worry about it and that he didn't really want a menagerie. He was about to tell her to let them all go free but then he stopped himself.

"Is there enough room there to make a profitable potion ingredient farm?" Harry asked.

"Oh yes sir. The greenhouses have been empty for years but we can restock." Mally, the elf, said.

"Excellent, I'll send a letter with you as well then." Harry said and started a new letter. "If the menagerie is suitable get some potion producing animals too."

Mally grinned excitedly and popped away once Harry finished the second letter. "That should keep the majority of the elves busy. Alright moving on, cooks, I need one of you to learn how to cook vegetarian, the Hogwart's elves can teach you what I taught them. Decide amongst yourselves who that will be. The other order of business that I have for you is to go find out what food you can bring to a prisoner in the Ministry building itself, and then make the best food you can and take it to my Godfather, Sirius Black. I don't want him eating prison food anymore, he has a trial soon and I want to make sure he looks healthy for it. On Christmas I want you to feed him until he can't eat anymore."

All eleven cooks huddled together and talked amongst themselves before ten of them popped away. The last one turned to Harry. "I am Belly sir." She said. "It has been decided that I would do your cooking unless you want another elf instead."

"I'm sure you'll be more than up to the task." Harry said. "It will be slow for you for a few years still, if you want yourself and the other cooks could join the Hogwart's kitchen staff while I'm here. Now go to the kitchens and talk to them."

"Yes Sir!" Belly said loudly with a smile and popped down to the kitchens.

"Alright Marny!" Harry said turning to the sole remaining elf, clapping his hands together. "First, can you apparate me to my properties even if I'm officially the head of house yet?"

"Yes sir."

"Good, second question. Do you have enough time to be my personal assistant while maintaining your duties as head elf?" Harry assumed that jumping up and down excitedly was an exaggerated nod. "I'll take that as a yes then. I have a few things I'll need soon."

Harry conjured a third piece of parchment and made his list. Harry handed the list over and watched as Marny read it over, he was waiting for the reaction to one of the items. When he saw the shock he chuckled. "I expect the Dementor's bone will be the hardest thing to find."

"Yes sir, it will." Marny said as he folded the list up and put it in his pocket.

"Alright, here is the key to my vault, use as much as is necessary, but don't get ripped off." Harry said handing his key over. The elf saluted and popped away.

Harry walked out of the room and let it return to a blank wall before he paced again. I need the place where things are hidden.

HPCOC

Harry dropped a few feet onto his bed after warping back with the diadem. He giggled when he bounced, glad that he was the only Ravenclaw that decided to stay. Harry wrapped the diadem up and buried it at the bottom of his trunk until he decided when and where to dispose of them.

Harry checked his map and saw that while Dumbledore was in the Great Hall, the Weasleys were just arriving. This was good. Harry warped down to a nearby hallway and made his way to lunch. Dumbledore was in the middle of his explanation as to why there was only one small table instead of all of the house tables, there were only five students and the faculty for the break.

When the twins slid apart and gave Harry a pointed look, Harry assumed he was meant to sit there. Harry poured himself some cider while greeting everyone. The seat the twins opened for Harry was unfortunately directly across from Ron, Harry didn't remember him being quite so disgusting while eating.

The meal was otherwise pleasant and Harry managed to stay focused on the twins and their talk about the tagging the common rooms prank at the beginning of the year. Harry chose not to say anything while they theorized who could have gotten access to all of the common rooms, the Head Boy and Head Girl were the primary

suspects, much to Percy's consternation. Then Ron did something totally expected and totally unthinkable.

"Hey Harry, want some sausage?" Ron asked waiving around a plate half full of the greasy little meat tubes, worse was that his mouth was full of half chewed sausages as well. As he spoke a piece of sausage flew out of his mouth and landed right in front of Harry, who promptly turned green.

"Oh god." Harry said bleakly before jumping up and running out of the hall hoping to get to a bathroom before he threw up.

"Ronald Weasley everyone!" Fred said waiving his hand at his little brother.

"Reaching new levels of gross every day since he was born." George finished. "Now making people actually vomit."

"What will he accomplish next?" Fred added on as Ron turned puce. "Come on Forge, lets see if we can salvage the Weasley name."

"Right behind you Gred." George said and followed his twin out of the hall.

"What did I do?" Ron asked blankly to the rest of the diners.

HPCOC

"Hey Harry." George said when they walked into the bathroom, arriving while Harry was rinsing out his mouth.

"Hey guys." Harry said sounding very much like he just threw up.

"We're sorry about that thing we call a brother." Fred said.

"Mum's been on his case for years about his table manners." George continued.

"I don't think he knows what 'vegetarian' means either." Fred added. "He's kinda dumb."

"Just don't assume the rest of us are that daft."

"We think he was dropped on his head." This made Harry laugh.

"It's okay guys, really, I just think I'll be taking my meals in the kitchen for the rest of the break." Harry said.

"We'll join you if you want." George offered.

"We have some business to discuss anyway." Fred said.

"Prankster to prankster business." George added.

"I wouldn't mind company." Harry said. "I don't think I'm going to eat again today though."

"We don't blame you." The twins said together.

"Do you two know how to get into the kitchen?" Harry asked.

"Found out last year." Fred said.

"Do you know?" George asked.

"Yes." Harry said. "So what's your business?"

"Well, we were talking about the common room tagging you know." Fred started.

"And we were wondering if you had any theories as to how it was accomplished." George continued

"Seeing as how you were able to gain entry to our room so easily."

"On your first night here."

"We figured you would be able to illuminate the methods this prankster used."

"Then we came to the conclusion that..."

"The prankster in question was probably you."

"Congratulations by the way."

"It normally wouldn't be important who did it,"

"But, it has been a goal of ours"

"For a great many years."

"Two and a half to be precise."

"To gain entry to the other three common rooms."

"This Christmas Holiday."

"With the record low amount of students staying."

"Is the perfect time to get in."

"And out."

"Without being caught."

"So we were wondering."

"If you would take us on a tour."

"Or at least tell us how to gain entry on our own."

"Did you two practice that?" Harry asked raising an eyebrow.

"Yes." They said together.

"Alright, tell you what." Harry started. "I'll give you a tour of Ravenclaw tower, and I'll let you into Hufflepuff but I won't tell you how."

"Fair enough."

"And Slytherin?"

"I'll let you in and I'll show you how I get in, I have business there anyway." Harry said watching the twins faces light up with their devilish smiles. "I would suggest bringing pranks to layer down while you can."

"Nah, too suspicious." Fred said.

"The three of us are the only ones with a prank reputation right now, thanks to your chicken." George said.

"All three of us would get nailed if we did something now." Fred finished.

"True." Harry said. "Tonight I'll open the Hufflepuff common room at eight. Don't be late."

HPCOC

After the twins left the bathroom Harry made his way back to his dorm. Once there he warped to Diagon Alley and visited Gringotts, in disguise, to make a significant withdrawal and converted most of it to pounds. Harry then stopped by a bathroom and disillusioned himself and warped to the place that won't have any magical residents for another twenty years or so, Cardiff. No one knew why there were no witches or wizards there, it's just the way it was.

After finding a private spot Harry resumed being visible and used a phone book to find a hat shop, an embroiderer, and a sign maker. He visited them in that order, happy to get the bulk of the tricky part of his Christmas shopping out of the way. Then he stopped at a convenience store and bought several spiral notebooks, a pack of ball point pens and enough junk food to use up the rest of the pounds he had.

After discretely shrinking his purchases, and finding somewhere private, he warped back to his dorm. Once there Harry wrote a two letters, one to Ollivander and one to Flourish and Blotts. One quick trip to the owlery later Hedwig was on her way to London with a bag of galleons to get a few more gifts.

Noting the time Harry warped off to the Hufflepuff common room.

HPCOC

The twins had no trouble finding the entrance to the Hufflepuff common room, they had found them all last year with the map, it was rather easy actually. They arrived just before 8 o'clock and as

soon as they got to the portrait Harry pushed it open, holding the map in one hand.

"Good timing, I just finished." Harry said and let the twins in, the Hufflepuff portrait wasn't very happy with the surprise opening.

"What did you do?" One of the twins asked as they looked around the common room.

"I moved everything one foot counter-clockwise." Harry said with a smile.

"What else did you do?" The same twin asked, Harry decided he was Fred.

"Absolutely nothing," Harry said. "They will be paranoid for a while though I imagine."

"You have an interesting style of pranks." George said nodding.

"Indeed, so is there anything you two wanted to do here or are we ready to head over to Slytherin?"

"We don't mean the puffs any harm." Fred said.

"We just needed to get in here once." George said.

"We can go whenever you're ready." Fred finished, prompting Harry to check the map.

Harry led them out and headed towards snake territory. They were walking in silence for a few minutes before George let his curiosity get the better of him. "So how are we getting in?"

"The door is right around the corner." Harry said shocked. "You couldn't wait a few more seconds?"

"Er, sorry."

"Here we are. You're going to like this." Harry said coming to a stop in front of the seemingly blank wall. "Open in the name of Salazar." He said in parseltongue.

While the passage opened he turned to see the twins standing there, jaws gaping. "Y-y-you're a parselmouth?"

"Yup!" Harry said happily. "Cool huh?"

"Shocking was the first word that came to mind." Fred said.

"But cool works too." George said nervously.

"You're not a dark wizard are you?" Fred asked.

"If you are we don't have a problem with it." George added quickly.

"No, not dark, don't worry." Harry said. "It's really silly that people think that, it's just a different language."

"Fair enough." George said following Harry down into the common room.

"Have a look around you two." Harry said before turning to address the room at large. "Hande?"

"That sounds really creepy." Fred said before jumping when he saw the snake slither past his feet.

"Good to see you Harry." Hande said.

"You as well. Have you uncovered any plots against me?" Harry asked.

"No, There is the one boy, Nott, but he doesn't seem like a threat."

"No, he isn't." Harry said. "I have a new job for you though, it is a bit higher risk."

"What do you need?"

"I need you to follow Professor Quirrell around and let me know immediately if he enters the third floor corridor that has a giant dog in it."

"I can do that."

"I know, be careful though, I have reason to suspect that he can speak the snake as well." Harry warned. "Do not listen to his orders if he spots you, but pretend to and find me. Don't approach me though unless I am alone or with these two."

"I will stay out of his sight as much as possible." Hande assured him and said farewell before slithering off, presumably to find Quirrell.

"So ready to see Ravenclaw tower?" Harry asked the twins.

"Yea, let's go." George said sounding stunned. "What did you tell that snake to do?"

"Just to follow someone and report back to me." Harry said off handedly leading them out of the common room. "Nothing to worry about."

HPCOC

The rest of Harry's evening, after the twins left Ravenclaw tower, was spent inside his pensieve copying the notes he made a few decades from now detailing Horcrux detection and the process of removing one from a living subject without killing them. It would take several evenings worth of work, longer since he was translating it into parselscript at the same time.

Harry had been doing the research in his free time and never completed some of the calculations. He was sure that he could finish them by summer, though, and decided that this summer he was going to yank Voldy's soul out of his forehead.

One morning after breakfast with the twins in the kitchen, the three of them took the secret passage to Honeyduke's and Harry finished his Christmas shopping. That night he wrapped the gifts and sent them off.

Sharing meal times with the twins down in the kitchen quickly led them to having the same depth of a relationship that they had the last time. Harry was sure that he would be getting involved with their pranks frequently in the future.

Finally Christmas morning arrived and Harry was able to find out what his friends thought to get him. From most of them it was fairly

typical, candy and joke products, though Neville did get him a book on magical plants. Tonks sent him a wand polishing kit and a picture of her giving a very suggestive wink and smile. Hermione sent him a gift certificate to Flourish and Blotts with a note saying that she didn't know what Nick had taught him and didn't want to get something redundant. The most notable gift though was from Dumbledore. Instead of the invisibility cloak Dumbledore gave him a bag of sweets and an invitation for tea that afternoon, which Harry was unfortunately unable to find a reason to turn down.

HPCOC

Dan and Emma Granger watched their daughter rip into her presents with great enthusiasm. She had changed so much in her time at Hogwarts. She didn't have any friends at her old school and became very quiet and reserved. When they picked her up from the train station she was with a girl who had pink hair. After a very animated farewell between the two of them Hermione spent the whole ride home talking about her friends. The pink haired girl, Tonks, and a boy named Harry seemed to have a great impact on their little girl. When they saw how many gifts she got from this boy they decided that they would have to meet him as soon as they could. She received a beginners guide to something called 'Occlumency', a wand holster, a bag of wizarding candies, including to their amusement, tooth flossing mints.

"I don't get it." Hermione said as she held up Harry's last gift to her, a large wooden letter E.

HPCOC

"A hat?" Tonks said holding up a bubblegum pink hat with a black ribbon around it that had 'NYM' embroidered in the same shade of pink. It was her last gift from Harry, she also got a copy of the occlumency guide, a wand holster, and a variety of muggle junk food.

Ted Tonks started laughing at her look of confusion. "It is a fedora dear."

"A fedora, that says 'Nym'" Tonks raised an eyebrow, then groaned.
"A Nym fedora."

She glared at her parents while they laughed, then smiled and put her hat on and went back to opening her presents.

HPCOC

"Good afternoon Harry." Dumbledore said as Harry entered his office. "Did you like the sweets."

"Yes sir." Harry said respectfully, he had checked them for potions and found one that would lower his occlumency shields, he had disposed of all of them. "I almost ruined my appetite before breakfast on them."

"That is good to hear."

"So, why did you invite me to tea today?" Harry asked. "Is it to give me my father's cloak?"

Dumbledore spit out his tea. "How did you know about that?"

"I know about a lot Professor." Harry said.

"I was planning on sending it to you for your birthday." Dumbledore lied quickly. He had decided that Harry was too far out of his control to have the cloak, it looked like he didn't have a choice in the matter anymore though.

"Is it proper in wizarding society to give someone their own property as a present?" Harry asked.

"No, I'll admit that I was going to be lazy." Dumbledore said softly and retrieved Harry's cloak from his desk. "Here you go, don't abuse it or I'll have to confiscate it from you."

"Don't worry sir." Harry said tucking the cloak into his pocket. "I have no intention of getting caught with it."

"That doesn't alleviate my fears." Dumbledore laughed. "But I guess I can't expect anything else from James' son."

Their conversation remained casual for a time until Harry felt Dumbledore's legilimency, Harry decided to pretend that the potions in the sweets worked correctly and let Dumbledore think he had

access. Their conversation continued unimpeded while Dumbledore thought he was digging around Harry's head. Harry though was ready and decided that a little creative misdirection would be appropriate when Dumbledore started to push for information on Nick. Harry didn't supply any audio information but proudly showed a Native American, dressed as a cowboy, showing Harry how to summon things, Harry also showed more secure shields around the remaining information to discourage Dumbledore from pushing further.

When the tea time was finally over, and Harry was leaving, Dumbledore had just enough fake information to buy the theory of previous training by a very talented individual. In other words, he was right where Harry wanted him.

HPCOC

That night Harry warped to the Department of Mysteries at midnight, knowing no one would be there. Once the spinning room stopped spinning Harry requested the Hall of Prophecies and walked through the door that opened for him, into the time room. Harry saw the time-turner cabinet and got an idea. He quickly cast a permanent transfiguration on a loose quill making it look like a time turner, then he cast a very strong notice-me-not charm and a compulsion charm to pick a different time-turner. Then he stole a real time-turner and put the fake one in its place.

Smiling to himself he made his way into the Hall of Prophecies and quickly found the one relating to him and Voldemort. He picked it up off its stand and tapped it with his wand so that it would play the prophecy for him.

The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches

Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies

and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power
the Dark Lord knows not

and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while
the other survives

The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies

Harry was expecting that, and frankly he was glad, until the playback continued. Trelawney's voice was replaced by a clearly male voice just as distorted as Trelawney's voice but in a more gravely way.

Together born shall be The Children of Change

The world that was once will never be

Destroyed by the Forge, The Boy of Change

For many years The Girl he won't see

The One was loved by all

The other was cast out

Together they'll join in fall

The Boy knows what's to come

With knowledge unknown

The change was swift

With his final form the Enlightenment

He shall teach her

Together they shall go forth

Heroes to the world

All will bow to them

Together they will be

With Time.

Harry stood there stunned for a moment, then he smashed the orb on the floor and warped back to his room. Well...that was unexpected. He thought as he drifted off to sleep.

AN: Sorry this wasn't finished sooner. I got caught up reading other people's work this week. I feel like I had some things to clarify now but I can't for the life of me remember what they are.

AN: The tenses in the prophecy was for aesthetics rather than chronological consistency, sorry for any confusion. The scene with Ron and the sausage was just a convenient way to get the twins with Harry for their conversation, I don't plan for Harry to retaliate against Ron.

HPCOC

Harry is out of control. Dumbledore thought as he paced in his office, just after Harry left after their tea. I wasn't planning on giving him the Hallow, anymore. I should have known that he would know about it already. I wonder if he already knows about the stone.

Albus' carefully laid plan was in ruins from the moment Harry asked for his vault key. Hagrid was supposed to take an impressionable, young, muggle hating, desperate for rescue Harry into the magical world as his first exposure. But nooooo, somehow someone managed to find the boy. Now the weak willed martyr is being trained. He has to die or Voldemort will keep coming back! It's right there in the prophecy, this meddler 'Nick' is going to doom the whole world!

Complaining will get me nowhere. How do I get Harry back under my thumb? I need something he wants enough that if I can offer it to him he'll drop his...whatever his relationship is with Nick. At least I can still use the Mirror. Dumbledore thought. The Mirror! Of course. It should be fairly easy to get an eleven year old to reveal what the Mirror of Erised shows him, so long as he doesn't know what it does. That's settled then, step one: get Harry enthralled by the Mirror. I'll just put it out tonight and wait for him to succumb to the temptation of exploring invisibly.

HPCOC

He never showed up last night. Dumbledore thought angrily the next morning. The Gray Lady checked for me, he was out of bed. The only way that my beckoning charm wouldn't have pulled him into the Mirror's room was if he was on the other side of the castle. Well tonight I just have to make sure he is exploring the correct part of the castle.

HPCOC

Harry woke up and remembered the new prophecy. He'd been wishing that he would have discovered that it had been a dream. It was real though, which means he needed to interpret it. With a sigh of resignation he pulled a new notebook out of his trunk and started writing in Parselscript.

Original prophecy, translation, still have to end Tom.

New Prophecy...

Together born shall be the Children of Change. Probably means me and Tonks, born within twenty minutes of each other if her mother is to be believed. We're also the only ones that were different initially in this time line, well us and Lisa...wonder if she plays a role...

The world that was once will never be. Future of this world irrevocably changed? Seems likely.

Destroyed by the Forge, The Boy of Change. This could mean a lot of things. What was destroyed? What is 'the Forge'? 'The boy of change' could be either of those answers. Assuming I'm the boy, this could have happened on that Halloween night, the forge could be whatever Mum did to protect me, or Voldemort, or my memories from the future, pretty much anything or anyone that got involved with me that night. I could be the forge having destroyed the chances that this universe will be like the last one. Or it could be something that hasn't come up yet, heck if the fates have a sense of humor the forge could be the Weasley twins. Or it could literally be a forge, beware of metal workers in the future.

For many years the Girl he won't see. uh...

The One was loved by all.

The other was cast out. These two lines seem to be simply to further identify the children...either line could mean either of us I guess...I'm the one in the other prophecy and the Tonks' were thrown out of Family Black...but I certainly wasn't loved by my family, and I was cast out of the magical world...

Together they'll join in fall. The season? Or someone failing to do something, as in a fall from grace/the light/something...Join how? Meeting up or fusing together somehow or something else entirely?

The Boy knows what's to come

With knowledge unknown. Duh.

The change was swift. Another line that's very ambiguous. I did start undoing things as soon as I was able too...is that what this means?

With his final form the Enlightenment. This is concerning. This implies either I die or I stop being a metamorph somehow...or something that I won't understand until it happens. All three sound unpleasant, hopefully it will be the third option.

He shall teach her. Probably means after the final form line...I don't know how I could teach her if I die, ghost maybe? This line supports not dying slightly...I hope.

Together they shall go forth. Again probably means after the final form line, might be in reference to the 'join in fall' bit. If the fall references me, it would support the dying interpretation of the final form, then the joining and together might mean that we share a body afterwards...this prophecy is getting more and more unpleasant.

Heroes to the World

All will bow to them

Together they will be

With time.

So we do something good maybe? Is she going to help me kill Tom? What if in this world she is the one in the other prophecy and my role is to help her? Am I the power he knows not? The original prophecy still marks the one as a boy though...

All this prophecy really says is that Tonks and I get together and do something...I think I need a second opinion...

HPCOC

Awkward was the best word to describe breakfast that morning. Harry was there first and eating quietly when Ron showed up, alone.

He turned bright red when he saw that he was alone with Harry, and sat down as far away as humanly possible. Harry was rather grateful for this, the events of yesterday clearly at the front of both of their minds. Harry was fairly surprised that Ron would be up and about before his brothers, who came in a few minutes later. It didn't get any better when they arrived because the Twins took the seats on either side of Harry, and the Forge line of the prophecy came to mind again.

"You know, there are five of us right now." George said.

"If we can find three more people we could have a small game of Quidditch." Fred finished.

"Then there would be two chasers, a beater and a keeper for each team." George continued.

"Where would we find three more players?" Harry asked.

"We could ask the professors." George said shrugging.

"Or maybe recruit from Hogsmeade." Fred continued.

"Do you really think that there would be three adults who want to play outside, in the cold, for however long we want to play?" Harry asked. "They would probably get impatient."

"There are kids in Hogsmeade." Fred said, defending himself. "Some of the students here grew up in the village, we have a list somewhere."

"Dibs on Keeper." Ron called from down the table, thankfully remembering to swallow his food first.

"How about you Percy?" George asked.

"If you can manage to fill out the roster I'll be the other Keeper I suppose." Percy said haughtily.

"Brilliant, and with us as beaters, that only leaves three chaser spots." Fred said happily.

"Those are the easiest spots to fill too." George said.

"You two will be the beaters?" Harry asked.

"Of course they will." Ron said before continuing with the words Harry really didn't want to hear. "Gred and Forge absolutely destroy the opposition."

That has to be coincidence, the timing is too perfect. Still better safe than destroyed. Harry thought. "Erm, I think I'll pass."

"Don't be like that Harry." Fred said. "We'll go easy on you."

"Yea, we know you don't play." George finished.

"No, that's really okay." Harry said slightly nervous. "I'm not really into sports."

"You've never even tried it." George said.

"And we've heard about your flying lessons."

"Everyone knows you're a natural."

"Just give it a chance."

"You might love it."

"No, I really don't want to. Just drop it." Harry said sternly as Dumbledore walked in. "Good morning Professor."

"Good morning Harry." Dumbledore said. "How are you this morning?"

"Just fine, and yourself?" Harry asked.

"Never been better." Dumbledore before turning to the others. "Percival, Ronald, George, Fredrick, I trust the morning greets you well as well."

"Yes sir." The brothers chorused, while Dumbledore sat down facing the doors.

"So what are your plans for the day?" Dumbledore asked eyes twinkling.

"Well we were going to try to get a quidditch game together." Fred said.

"But we need four more people now.."

"That Harry has backed out."

"What's wrong with quidditch?" Dumbledore asked Harry.

"Erm, nothing. It just isn't for me." Harry said. "Why does everyone keep pressuring me on it?"

"Sorry, I didn't mean to." Dumbledore said. "It is just one of the most popular games in our world. It is unusual to find someone who doesn't care for it."

"Well I guess I am unusual then." Harry said, the discomfort of the situation was getting to be too much. "If you'll excuse me, have a nice meal."

As Harry was walking away Dumbledore did some discreet wand work under the table. If Harry wasn't so preoccupied with leaving he would have felt the silent spell hit him as he walked through the doors. Dumbledore sighed. "I think we have offended him."

"We?" Fred asked. "All he had done was reject the game before you showed up, sir."

"Fred!" Percy scolded. "Don't talk to the Headmaster that way!"

"It is fine Percival." Dumbledore said. "He might be correct."

"He should still show some respect." Percy said quietly, glaring at his brother.

"How can he not like quidditch though?" Ron asked. "It's the best game ever."

"Now now Ronald. It isn't our place to judge." Dumbledore said.
"Maybe he had a bad experience, there was that freak bludger attack earlier this year."

"Yes, that could make anyone find the game distasteful." Percy said.
"If I find out that any of you three have been harassing him about it I'll write mum."

"We would never harass anyone."

"About anything."

"Ever."

"How could you even think that of us?"

"Our own brother"

"Thinks we're nothing but harassing harassers"

"Oh the shame"

"How will we ever go on?" Both twins put their wrists to their foreheads and dramatically mimed fainting.

"What does 'harassing' mean?" Ron asked dumbfounded, causing the others to laugh, which in turn caused Ron to blush.

HPCOC

That evening, just after curfew, Harry was suddenly overcome with the need to try out the cloak. Specifically near the library. This naturally made Harry cautious. Checking the map he found Dumbledore sitting in the corner of a room near the Library. Harry was interested to note that it was an unused room. What's he up to? Harry thought as he took the map and cloak and left the tower.

As he walked he kept an eye on the map and noted with interest that the patrolling staff members were all on the other side of the castle. He doubted he would have run into any of them even without either cloak or map. Suddenly the castle itself seemed to be telling him where to go, and it was leading him right to Dumbledore. Might as

well not fight it. I wonder if it is Hogwart's trying to get me there or if it is Dumbledore.

After a few more minutes of walking he found the room in question. One more check to the map showed that Dumbledore was still in there, so he blanked the map and put it away before pushing the door open. Sitting in the middle of the cleared floor was the Mirror or Erised.

Oh yeah, I can't believe I forgot about that. Harry thought as he walked over in front of it, dropping his cloak along the way. It took all of his self control to not start laughing when he saw what his deepest desire was.

Harry was standing front and center like a regular mirror would show him, and in the background he could see the Mirror itself. What made it funny was that Voldemort and Dumbledore were both there as well, wearing dunce caps and circling the Mirror prodding it with their wands looking confused. The Mirror Harry turned and watched the futile search for a few minutes before turning back to the real Harry. Mirror Harry grinned like the cat who got the canary and reached into his pocket. The scene was very familiar as he withdrew his hand, with the Philosopher's Stone, and winked. When Mirror Harry put the Stone back in his pocket the real Harry felt it fall into his real pocket, just like last time.

"Well, I could watch this all night, but I'd rather not get caught." Harry said aloud and clearly. "I'd best go back to bed before someone comes by."

Harry gathered up his cloak from where he dropped it and as he threw it over his shoulders he turned back to the Mirror. "I'll be back tomorrow if I can."

That worked perfectly. Dumbledore thought, containing his glee until Harry was long gone. Tomorrow night I confront him about it and find out what he wants.

HPCOC

What do I do with you? Harry thought regarding the Philosopher's Stone, once he got back to his room. I obviously can't just hand you over to the fool. Maybe I should put it back in the Mirror. It gets

destroyed at the end of the year anyway...or does it?

Harry smiled and quickly transfigured a quill into a replica of the Stone, but made out of glass. After examining them closely, and finding the fake to be almost perfect, Harry wrapped the real stone up in one of Vernon's old socks and stuffed it in the bottom of his trunk next to the Horcrux and the time turner. There are going to be a lot of questions if my trunk is ever searched.

"Marny?" Harry called out.

"Yes Harry sir?" Marny asked as he popped into the room.

"Do I own any carving tools?" Harry asked.

"Yes sir. Wood, stone or metal?" Marny replied.

"Could you bring the stone and metal tools please?" Harry asked.

"Yes sir." Marny said and popped off.

Might as well solve all of this mess. Harry thought and conjured two small boxes, one labeled 27 and the other labeled 42. Harry put Ravenclaw's diadem into the one marked 27 and the real stone in the one marked 42.

"Thank you." Harry said when Marny popped back in. "Could you take these boxes and put one in the Sicilian house and the other in the French one? I don't care which is where."

"Right away sir." Marny said and took the boxes and popped away.

Harry set the fake stone and the time turner on his desk before pulling out a new memory and placing it in his pensieve. He went into his memory with a notebook and a pen. The memory was from the late 2020's. This was the event that put Hermione's name in the history books forever. With this one discovery Hermione revolutionized the Statute of Secrecy. She called her discovery the 'Expectation Rune', it was a bit of a misnomer though, it was a rune set, and a very complicated one at that. These runes would make the person looking at whatever was inscribed with the runes see whatever they were expecting to see. In old Harry's time every Auror

and hitwizard had pendants with the runes on them and, so long as they didn't get too flashy, no muggle would be able to tell they were using magic. Harry had the memory on pause for almost an hour as he painstakingly copied the runes down.

When Harry left the pensieve he noted the time and closed the curtains on his bed and put a silencing charm on it. Then, sitting down at his desk he pulled the fake stone and the time turner over to him along with the carving tools.

The sun was coming up when he finished carving. Now anyone who looked at the fake stone would see the real stone unless they expected it to be fake, all of their tests would confirm that it was the real thing too. The time turner would look like any ordinary necklace now, unless of course the viewer expected Harry to have a time turner. Harry noted the time again and undid the charms on his bed. Laying down his spun his time turner and went back to just after he started carving. Harry set his alarm and went to sleep hoping his idea would work.

That morning when Harry's alarm went off he knew he had ten minutes to get out of his bed before he saw himself. Harry did the only thing he could and checked the map before quietly warping away.

HPCOC

That night after curfew Harry felt the compulsion to explore again. Understanding what it meant Harry made his way back to the room with the Mirror. Dumbledore was in there again, disillusioned like every time before. Harry smirked, he was ready for tonight.

"I told you I would be back." Harry said to the mirror. Harry watched as his mirror self took the stone out of his pocket, feeling the weight leave his real pocket, and turned to throw it in between Mirror Dumbledore and Mirror Voldemort. Real Harry cracked a grin as Mirror Dumbledore and Mirror Voldemort saw the fake stone land and they both jumped towards it. The mirror seemed to have seen muggle cartoons because Mirror Dumbledore and Mirror Voldemort were engulfed in a cloud of dust with random body parts visible from random places at random intervals, just like two cartoons fighting over something. Mirror Harry was rolling around on the floor

laughing at the spectacle and Real Harry was inclined to follow suit, but he knew he still had a job to do. "I could stay here all night."

"And that is the danger of the Mirror of Erised." Dumbledore's voice said behind him, Harry pretended to be surprised and quickly stood while turning around.

"I'm sorry Professor. I didn't see you there." Harry said doing his best to look embarrassed. "I guess I didn't fulfill my promise of not getting caught with the cloak huh?"

"Indeed not my boy." Dumbledore said smiling genially. "I'll do you a favor and let you off the hook this time, if you promise not to come to this mirror again."

"Thank you sir, you won't regret it." Harry said smiling up at him. "Why shouldn't I look at this mirror though?"

"The Mirror of Erised is a trap of sorts." Dumbledore said. "It doesn't grant us anything and it doesn't tell the truth."

"So what does it do?" Harry asked. "I know it can't show anything real. I figured that out the first time I looked."

"What do you see?" Dumbledore asked, schooling his nerves.

"I'm Headboy sir, and my parents are standing behind me smiling proudly, along with Nick." Harry lied.

"And what do you think of that?" Dumbledore asked leadingly.

"Well...I don't know..." Harry said, trying to sound disappointed with himself.

"The Mirror shows you what you want most." Dumbledore supplied. "In your case it would seem that you want to make your mentor and your parents proud of you."

"Oh, well that makes sense." Harry said.

"Indeed. It will take work though if you want to be Headboy." Dumbledore said. "First you have to be a prefect, which means that you have to keep your grades up and follow the rules."

"Yes, sir." Harry said nodding. "Erm, sir?"

"Yes Harry?"

"What do you see?" Harry asked.

"I see myself holding a pair of socks." Dumbledore said.

"Socks sir?"

"One can never have too many socks Harry." Dumbledore smiled.

"Oh."

"Why don't you take your cloak and go back to your dorm." Dumbledore suggested. "The Mirror will be moved tomorrow."

"Yes sir." Harry said gathering up his cloak. "Goodnight Professor."

"Goodnight Harry." Dumbledore said and watched Harry leave. He wants to be Headboy? All I need to do to control him is tell him certain things will change the likelihood of that happening. Perfect.

HPCOC

The rest of the break went by without issue. Harry received a short thank you note from Sirius for the food, it also promised good things once Sirius was released. His trial was only a month and a half away, the Prophet still hadn't reported Pettigrew's capture. Harry understood the politics of releasing that information. The Aurors were going to release word that questioning Sirius revealed a new suspect and then they would catch said suspect quickly, boosting their public opinion and probably netting themselves some more funding. But that was neither here nor there because today was the day that the students would get back.

The day was dragging on and on. After breakfast the twins managed to distract Harry. Distract was a nice word, they had pranked Harry when he came into the Great Hall. Turning his hair hot pink was quickly remedied with his metamorph skills, breaking the charm that made his voice sound like he was a pack a day smoker since the first time he was eleven took a few hours. Getting rid of the plume of

pink smoke that followed him took another hour, but Harry thought it may have just worn off instead of being broken.

At lunch Harry retaliated and stuck them both to the wall and hit them with a tickling charm. Dumbledore scolded Harry and told him that that was no way to make Headboy, so Harry released them, making Dumbledore very happy even though he didn't show it. The twins however were ecstatic and, while they called off pranking each other, they challenged Harry to several games of exploding snap. Soon though Harry was sitting in the entrance hall bored waiting for his girls to come home.

At long last Harry heard the train pull into Hogsmeade station. He never noticed how slow the threstrals pulled the carriages before. Soon though Harry saw a pink hat and a head full of bushy brown hair running across the hall towards him.

"I like your hat." Harry said as Tonks reached him first and gave him the biggest hug of his life.

"Thanks, so do I, even if it is a pun." Tonks said smiling and gave him a kiss on the cheek before letting him go.

"I assume the E is a pun as well." Hermione said taking her turn to give him a hug and kiss.

"Yea. I take it you didn't get the joke." Harry said smiling.

"No, neither did Tonks." Hermione said.

"I don't blame you." Harry said. "It's really lame."

"Tell me." Hermione commanded.

"Are you sure?" Harry asked one eyebrow raised.

"Yes."

"Alright." Harry said and then looked Tonks in the eye. "I had an easy time coming up with yours. But I just couldn't think of anything for Hermione. In the end I gave up and just gave Her-my-own-E."

When both girls just stared at him blankly he continued. "Until it regrows Potter is spelled P-O-T-T-R."

"Wow that's bad." Tonks said flatly.

"Yea." Harry turned back to Hermione. "If it is any consolation, that was the prettiest E in the shop."

"It's okay Harry, not every joke can be funny." Hermione said patting him on the shoulder. "So did you miss us?"

"You have no idea." Harry said shaking his head. "I haven't flirted with anyone in almost three weeks."

AN: Harry's deepest desire is to make Dumbledore and Voldemort look like idiots if it wasn't clear. The rest of this year should pick up pace, next chapter will be Sirius' trial, then after that will be 2-3 chapters of Quirrelmort resolution, and then 1 or 2 chapters of aftermath. Then Year 2 starts! Year 2 will be much further from canon than this year is.

"You know my mother almost threw away your christmas present." Blaise said as he sat down next to Harry in charms class.

"Why would she do a silly thing like that?" Harry asked. "Isn't there some sort of honor to whomever in the pure-blood community who becomes close with me?"

"A little full of yourself aren't you?" Hermione asked.

"Not really." Daphne said from the other side of Blaise. "He is rich, and famous, and he will control a portion of the government when he is old enough."

"And in this world reputation is everything." Harry said. "If I don't do stupid things and continue to be seen as a force to be reckoned with, power hungry people will always be trying to influence me."

"It's really a curse." Blaise said. "As soon as he starts showing potential people will start lavishing him with gifts and bribes."

"He'll be expected to attend every high society function." Daphne added.

"And he'll need to decided which high ranking official to offend when he can only go to one holiday event." Tonks finished.

"That sounds terrible." Hermione said very dryly, Harry thought she was being sarcastic.

"Do you have any idea how annoying that will be?" Harry asked. "It is bad enough now that I have to wear a disguise to Diagon Alley if I don't want to be accosted by fans. At least they don't offer me anything to try to find some way to politely refuse."

"You could always be rude." Tonks said.

"But that doesn't lend itself well to my ambition to become known as the Greatest Wizard Ever, capitalized mind you, including Merlin himself." Harry said.

"Now you're full of yourself." Daphne said. "You can't possibly believe that you are a greater wizard than Merlin."

"Well of course I'm not." Harry said. "I'm only eleven. See me at graduation. You still haven't explained why your mother almost destroyed my gift."

"Oh, right." Blaise said pausing for a moment at the sudden change of topic. "She said that no pure-blood should have anything to do with muggles, including eating their candy. I had to shove the 'From' tag in her face and tell her that it was an inside joke between the two of us before she would stop making her way over to the fireplace."

Daphne was nodding with his story. "My father shot an incendio at the box of popcorn, that was a mistake. It took me and my sister half an hour after that to convince him that the package wasn't a bomb."

By this time Harry, Hermione and Tonks were all laughing. Finally Tonks was able to contain her mirth long enough to speak. "You're parents are insane."

"You come from a Wizarding family too." Blaise retorted affronted. "Can you say they reacted better?"

"Yes I can." Tonks said laughing again. "My father is muggleborn and my mother doesn't buy into the whole pure-blood rhetoric. They were thrilled."

"Not that it applies to the conversation, but my parents were highly amused by the magical candies." Hermione said. "They did tell me not to eat too many though."

"Of course they would like them." Blaise said. "They're muggles. How could they find our world anything but fascinating?"

"I said amusing, not fascinating." Hermione arrogantly said looking down her nose at Blaise, causing a new round of laughter.

"In all seriousness." Daphne said. "Have any of you heard what Draco got this year?"

"Other than muggle junk food no." Harry said smiling. "I bet Lucy was really excited over that."

"You probably just made things worse for Draco." Blaise said. "His father gave him a litter box, and his mother gave him a bag of catnip and the advice not to eat it all at once."

"Oh they got him a cat?" Hermione asked

"No. They said that lions are cats and Gryffindors are lions therefore Draco is a cat now." Blaise said. "Or something to that extent, I may have been paraphrasing."

"That's terrible." Hermione said. "Why would someone do that to their own child?"

"Pure-bloods are crazy." Harry said. "Present company excluded. My godfather was disowned from his family because he was a Gryffindor."

"And that is likely to be what will happen to Draco." Daphne said. "Though he might get spared that fate just because the Malfoy line has no other heirs."

"You lot are bonkers." Hermione said.

"Our ancestors are bonkers." Blaise corrected. "Every generation wants to change how things are done but their parents get them stuck in the culture too firmly before they die. If wizards weren't so long lived our world would be much different."

Their conversation was cut off then as Professor Flitwick arrived and started class.

HPCOC

"Draco!" Harry called out a few days later.

"What do you want Harry?" Draco asked as the other boy jogged up.

"I, um, heard about your family's reaction to your sorting." Harry said rubbing the back of his neck. "Um, if it gets worse, just remember House of Potter has a long standing tradition of taking in people in your situation."

"My situation?" Draco asked.

"Slytherin family having a Gryffindor son and disapproving." Harry said.

"Oh, how long of a tradition? Seems oddly specific." Draco said.

"Erm, well it has happened once that I know of." Harry said smiling.

"It's not a tradition if it has only happened once." Draco said.

"Hey, this year I learned that all traditions have a first time." Harry said. "Just because you are only the potentially second beneficiary doesn't mean it isn't long standing. I'm sure future generations will hold up their end of the task."

"Are you insane?" Draco asked.

"Probably." Harry said nodding sadly. "Still the point remains, while I hope you never have to take me up on it, the offer of asylum is there."

"Why are you doing this for me?" Draco asked suspiciously.

"House of Black has to stick together, even if I'm not yet a part of it and even then only through adoption." Harry explained.

"Erm, thanks I guess." Draco said and walked off shaking his head confused.

HPCOC

The boys of the First Year Ravenclaw dorm room had a very dramatic experience some time around 2am one day in late January. For Harry the moment was like one he had many years ago next year, for the rest of the boys Harry's scream marked the start of a brand new event. Harry's scream was, of course, triggered by waking up to a house elf's face merely inches away from his own.

"Are we under attack?" Harry heard a voice call from the room.

"Who screamed?" Came another.

"And why is there a girl up here?" Asked a third.

"Probably spending the night in Harry's bed." That had to be Anthony.

"There are no girls in here." Harry called out. "I was just surprised by my house elf."

"House elf?" This first voice asked. Kevin, Harry decided.

"Wait, that was you screaming?" Anthony asked. "That's golden."

"If I get mocked about that from anyone else you're going to end up hanging from the astronomy tower by your ankles." Harry threatened. "Anyways I need to talk to my elf so I'm going to put up privacy wards now. You can all go back to sleep."

"I think we should stay up in case he was lying and there is a girl in there who screamed." Anthony suggested.

"Shut up Tony." Harry replied jokingly. "No one likes you."

"Fine!" Anthony said loudly continuing the joke. "I don't have to put up with this! I'm going to bed!"

After some tired chuckling Harry heard the other boys going back to bed. After a quick privacy ward he turned to Marny. "So, whats up?"

"Harry Potter Sir, I have been looking for a month for the dementor's bone." Marny said seeming nervous. "I have found a way to get one but it will be...expensive."

"Marny, I have plenty of money, I don't really care what it takes, I need that bone." Harry said tiredly

"Yes, sir." Marny said and popped away quietly, allowing Harry to fall back into the calming embrace of slumber.

HPCOC

Peter Pettigrew Captured!

By: Andy Smudgley

Sources inside the ministry have confirmed today that they have captured Peter Pettigrew, whom you may know as being the last victim of the notorious mass murderer Sirius Black. What you may not know is that during preliminary questioning before his trial next week Mr. Black claimed that Pettigrew was the real traitor and made his escape with the aid of his illegal animagus form, a common rat.

Our brave Auror force spent an unknowable amount of time and money searching down the evasive rodent. My sources were not able to tell me exactly how Pettigrew was found and captured but they were proud to announce that he has been apprehended. Speculators say that the capture of Pettigrew could change the whole outcome of Mr. Black's trial next week.

The life of Peter Pettigrew: Page 4

Details on the Black Trial: Page 5

What does this mean for the boy-who-lived? Experts weigh in: Page 8-10

"I can't believe this!" Tonks protested angrily when she finished reading.

"Me either!" Harry agreed indignantly. "How could they give me three pages? That's more than all the rest combined!"

"Um, that's not what I meant." Tonks said.

"Oh, then what did you mean?"

"I just can't believe that the ministry would take credit for you capturing Pettigrew." Tonks said.

"I told you Nick captured him." Harry said frowning.

"Well, I don't believe you." Tonks said.

"Nym, I'm hurt. At least explain your reasoning." Harry said.

"Namely, why would someone, who knew who had the rat and where he was, wait for school to start to sneak in and steal it?"

Tonks asked. "Hogwart's is one of the safest buildings in Europe. You don't break in unless you don't have an other choice."

"True, Tom did try to get the Stone from Gringott's before he broke in here." Harry said under his breath to himself.

"Who's Tom?" Hermione asked.

"And what stone?" Tonks added.

"And when?" Hermione finished.

"Tom Riddle a.k.a. Voldemort. The Philosopher's Stone. And a long time ago, sorta." Harry said.

"What do you mean sorta?" Tonks asked.

"Well, time is subjective. What is a long time ago for me might not be for, say, Dumbledore." Harry said.

"Oh. Wait, thee Philosopher's Stone?" Tonks said.

"Yup, don't worry though, he didn't get it." Harry said.

"I haven't read about Voldemort breaking in anywhere in Hogwart's: A History." Hermione said.

"That's because it isn't history." Harry said.

"But you said it happened a long time ago." Hermione pointed out.

"And I also said that you can't judge time like I judge time, at least that's what I meant, the whole time being subjective thing was supposed to imply that." Harry said.

"But that means...But...wait!...no...I'm confused." Hermione muttered.

"That is perfectly acceptable. I hope I can have the privilege of explaining someday." Harry said. "Maybe then people will stop thinking I'm insane."

"Probably not." Tonks said.

"Agreed." Harry said quietly.

HPCOC

The morning of Sirius' trial found Harry, Tonks and Hermione standing at the gargoyle guarding Dumbledore's office. Harry still wasn't quite sure how Hermione ended up there. He figured that two people claiming that they needed more emotional support than the other could lend was pretty hard to ignore. That or Dumbledore just let her go for no reason other than to shut Harry and Tonks up. Either way there she was with the other two looking equally the fool as the three of them stood there shouting every type of candy they could think of at the statue.

"Enough of of this!" Harry said drawing his wand. "Move now of face my wrath!"

If the statue felt any fear it hid it behind a stony expression. If the statue had anything to be proud of it was the fact that he was as tough as granite and as stubborn as a mountain, he was practically unmovable and wasn't about a little firstly make a pebble out of him. He resolved to ignore the pest. He wasn't expecting the incoming reducto to be so strong though.

"After you ladies." Harry said and assisted the girls in climbing over the rubble without harming their new dress robes, Harry's expense.

"Was that really necessary?" Hermione asked.

"Probably not, but it worked." Harry said.

"Well you're taking all the fall out." Hermione said.

"Sounds good." Harry replied.

"What's fall out?" Tonks asked.

"It is the toxic remnants of a very powerful muggle weapon." Harry said. "And slang for anything bad that happens as a result of something else happening."

"Oh." Tonks said reaching up to knock on the door.

"Enter." Dumbledore's voice called out from within just before she knocked.

"How does he do that?" Hermione asked.

"He has a portrait in the stairwell that informs for him, and a pressure plate under the floor here so he knows when the visitor arrives." Harry said as Hermione opened the door.

"How do you know that Harry?" Dumbledore asked.

"Trade secret." Harry said smiling. "So time to go?"

"Ah, no, We were supposed to meet at Professor Flitwick's office in ten minutes to go from there. I was about to leave." Dumbledore said.

"Oh right." Harry said chuckling sheepishly. "Erm, lead the way?"

"As you wish." Dumbledore said and lead them back down the stairs. He and Harry helped the girls over the rubble again. They didn't set off again and when the children looked to Dumbledore to see why they just saw him regarding the pile of rubble with an inquisitive eye.
"Should I ask what happened?"

Harry looked at his feet sheepishly, Tonks tried to hide her grin and Hermione just glared at Harry. "Well Professor, Harry Tonks and I were here guessing at your password when Harry-"

"HERMIONE DID IT!" Harry shouted cutting Hermione off and pointing before running off down the hall.

"WHAT? HARRY JAMES POTTER GET BACK HERE RIGHT NOW!" Hermione yelled down the hall. "I can assure you Professor, I had nothing to do with this."

"I believe you Ms. Granger." Dumbledore said laughing. He waved his wand and repaired the gargoyle completely. "There, no harm no foul. Although it is rather extraordinary feat for an eleven year old to accomplish."

"So is killing a troll, sir." Tonks said as they started walking off towards Flitwick's office, presumably the same place that Harry fled to.

"True true." Dumbledore said pensively as they walked.

HPCOC

"I still can't believe that you tried to blame that on me." Hermione said as the five of them, Flitwick had joined their party at the floo, made their way down through the Ministry of Magic.

"I didn't try to blame it on you." Harry said sounding shocked.

"Then what do you call proclaiming that I am at fault and then running away?" Hermione asked.

"Adherence to tradition?" Harry said dubiously.

"What tradition would that be? Throwing your friends under the bus?" Hermione said arms crossed.

"No silly, blaming the least likely person when you're so obviously the culprit that it doesn't even warrant debate." Harry said seriously.
"It's part of the prankster code."

"There is a prankster code?" Hermione asked.

"Nothing written of course." Harry said. "Just ask the Weasley Twins. They know all about it."

"Sounds like something you just made up." Hermione said. "Back me up Tonks."

"No. Harry is right." Tonks said watching Hermione's jaw drop. "It was fairly obvious that one of the three of us had done that, and of the three of us Harry is clearly the only one who would, let alone could."

"I don't see how that gives him the right to blame me for it." Hermione said.

"It is no different than if he said that the Mongol Hordes broke in a did it." Tonks said while Harry nodded enthusiastically. "So preposterous that it can't be true and therefore is a joke."

"I do find it unusual that Mr. Potter would joke around so much on a day like this." Flitwick said. "If being serious is necessary at any point it is today."

"Why would I be Sirius? He has to be himself today." Harry said.

"That joke was old before you were born." Dumbledore said unamused.

"Be that as it may, I have found that I have a sarcastic enjoyment of tasteless jokes." Harry said before his smile suddenly disappeared.
"Oh God! I'm a Hipster."

"A what?" Hermione asked.

"Uh, don't worry about it." Harry said quickly, hipsters were still almost twenty years away, or he thought anyway, he never looked into the history of the trend. "They're not important."

"If you say so." Hermione said looking at him like he was crazy.

"Am I a hipster?" Tonks asked.

"No, I would never associate with one and wouldn't suggest you do either." Harry said sternly.

"Is that your way of telling me you don't like me?" Tonks asked.

"Erm, no, how did you get that?" Harry asked.

"Well you just told us that you are a hipster and that we shouldn't hang out with them. Therefore we shouldn't hang out with you." Tonks said teasing him. "If you don't want to hang out with us just say so. You don't need to invent a whole category of people just to spare our feelings."

"Oh, you're joking. Good. I was worried that you really thought that." Harry said wiping away a fake bead of sweat.

"How could you not like me? I'm Tonks."

"And I wouldn't replace you for the world." Harry said pulling her into a one armed hug.

"But you would me?" Hermione asked pouting.

"Of course not." Harry said motioning her to join the hug on his other side. "Sometimes I wonder if you ask these things just for the sympathy hugs."

"Of course we do." Tonks said hugging him tighter. "Right Hermione?"

"Mmhmm." Hermione said tightening her own hold on the boy.

"Sirius will be so proud!" Harry said grinning as the girls laughed.

HPCOC

When Dumbledore left the group to join the rest of the Wizengamot Professor Flitwick guided them to their seats with the rest of the public witnesses. The only exciting moment of the first five hours was when Sirius was brought out and Harry caught his eye. Other than that so far it had just been character witness after character witness. The prosecution was trying to paint him as a remorseless womanizer and prankster, which he was naturally. The defense was trying to paint him as a loving friend with a great sense of humor, which he was naturally.

By the end of the third hour Harry and Tonks were fulfilling requests by Hermione on what forms to take. By the end of the fourth hour Harry and Tonks had fallen asleep. After the fifth hour ended Hermione woke them up. "Sirius just got called to the stand, I think it is almost over."

"Thank god, this is the most boring trial I have ever been to." Harry said rubbing his eyes.

"How many trials have you been to?" Hermione asked.

"That's beside the point." Harry said. "It's just nice that there is finally someone interesting to listen to."

"Hey I resent that. My mother testified earlier." Tonks said.

"I'm not even sure if it is still the same day as when that happened dear." Harry said. "I think it has been long enough to factor her out."

"Fair enough." Tonks said as the court official administered veritaserum. "Now shut up and listen."

"Yes ma'am." Harry said quietly, turning his attention to the court.

"What is your name?" The prosecutor asked.

"Sirius Orion Black." Sirius responded.

"What was your relationship to James Potter?"

"He was my best friend and I was his best man at his wedding." Sirius said proudly.

"Were you responsible for the Potter's getting killed Halloween night 1981?"

"Objection." Cried the defense. "Leading the defendant."

"Sustained. Prosecutor please rephrase your question." Dumbledore said from the Chief Warlock's seat.

"Did you give the Potters' location to You-Know-Who?" The prosecutor grumbled.

"No." Sirius said.

"Do you know who did?"

"Yes."

"Who was the secret keeper for the Potters?"

"Peter Pettigrew."

"Did you go after Peter with the intention of killing him the next day?"

"Yes." Sirius said and a few shocked gasps were heard from around the room.

"Did you accomplish your task?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I had a change of heart when I saw him and decided to just restrain him until the Aurors arrived." Sirius said.

"And what happened then?"

"Then Peter blew up the street and cut his finger off." Sirius said.

"How is it that no one saw Mr. Pettigrew leaving the scene?"

"I believe he shifted into his animagus form and escaped into the sewers."

"Mr. Pettigrew's school records show that he wasn't talented enough to learn that particular transfiguration. Why do you think he is an animagus?"

"James, myself and Peter all became animagi during our fifth year. James and I helped Peter a lot."

"Why would you three become animagi?"

"Objection! That is irrelevant to the case." The defense called out.

"Sustained. Please continue." Dumbledore said.

"Fine. Why was Mr. Pettigrew selected as the Potters' Secret Keeper?"

"I was too obvious. Without knowing that Peter was already a death eater we still trusted him, and of the two of us no one would expect him."

The questioning went on aimlessly for a few more minutes before Sirius left the stand they brought out Peter. After he got dosed

with the truth potion himself he spent a few minutes agreeing with everything Sirius said, then went on a self loathing attempt for pity claiming that he was a coward and looking for protection and the rest of that worthless dribble that Harry had been expecting. At long last the Wizengamot left to deliberate. A few minutes later they filed back in and Dumbledore took his place bringing all the focus on himself.

"The Wizengamot has come to a decision. Sirius Orion Black is hereby cleared of all charges, and will be awarded 100,000 galleons for each year of his wrongful imprisonment. The Department of Magical Law Enforcement wishes to inform you that if you register your animagus form before you leave they will waive the registration fee along with the fine and prison time for being unregistered." Dumbledore said. "We will meet again tomorrow for Peter Pettigrew's trial."

HPCOC

Harry, Tonks and Hermione found Sirius as everyone was vacating the court room. Harry wasted no time tackling Sirius in a hug. "Hiya Padfoot."

"Hi Pup. Have you been talking to Remus?" Sirius asked.

"No, why?" Harry asked.

"Just wondering how you know my nickname." Sirius said. "I felt that was the most likely reason."

"Nope, just a good memory is all." Harry said smiling. "Speaking of Remus though, here he comes."

"Sirius, I'm so sorry that I thought it was you." Remus said when he approached.

"It's okay Remus, we didn't tell you we made the switch. How could you know?" Sirius said smiling at his friend. "I won't let you beat yourself up about it. Besides there is someone you should meet. Remus this is Harry, Harry this is Remus."

Remus shook Harry's hand. "I was also called-

"Moony, yea I know." Harry said, causing Remus to look at Sirius only to get a shrug in reply. "But I haven't gotten to make my introductions yet. Sirius, I believe you will remember when your cousin Andy had a daughter named Nymphadora. Well here she is all grown up."

"Don't call me by my first name though." Tonks said. "I don't care if you're the only chance my mother has of rejoining the Black Family, I will kill you."

"Good to know there is still a sense of humor in the family, or somewhat in the family." Sirius said laughing. "I'll see what I can do about getting the Tonks line reinstated."

"How are you going to do that anyway? Didn't your mother disown you?" Tonks asked.

"Fortunately she died before my Father did and he reinstated me and my inheritance." Sirius said. "Harry I don't think you have introduced this delightful looking young lady yet?"

"You're correct my esteemed Dogfather." Harry said pulling Hermione forward. "This delight is the third leg of our triangle of chaos and destruction. She is known by many as the smartest witch of our age, and known by a few as a ruthless destroyer of innocent statues and gargoyles, but most people call her Hermione Granger."

"The destroyer of statues and gargoyles?" Sirius repeated. "I have to hear that story."

"Maybe when we have time Padfoot. It is an epic tale that will take hours to regale with proper propriety." Harry said.

"It is in no way an epic tale. An epic sentence maybe." Hermione said before turning to the Marauders. "Harry blew up Professor Dumbledore's gargoyle then blamed it on me."

"That wasn't even an epic sentence." Tonks said sadly.

"Very anti-climatic." Sirius agreed.

"I would call it a let down." Remus added. "But destroying Dumbledore's gargoyle is impressive. We were trying for years to pull that off. How did you do it?"

"Reducto." Harry said blushing slightly as the adults' jaws dropped.

AN: I could go on a little while longer I suppose but I think I would just be rambling at this point, which I don't want to do.

I would like to request that anyone who can point out where in canon it is stated that an animagus cannot choose their form please do so. I can't remember that being anywhere and I am starting to think about who will be getting what forms and if they can choose it will change what I do a lot. No one is going to have a magical form so don't bother asking.

Thanks for reading.

"And then Padfoot carried Wormtail all around Hogsmeade in his mouth." Remus choked out between laughs. "There were too many people around for Wormtail to change back, Padfoot showed off his trophy for the whole trip, while James and I filled his orders in town."

Sirius and all three children were doubled over clutching at their sides in laughter as Moony recounted his tale. Sirius controlled himself enough to look at a clock, then he stopped laughing entirely. "Merlin it's getting late. We have to get you kids back to school."

"Aww." The other four chorused.

"I thought Moony was the responsible one." Harry said.

"He is...strange, perhaps some latent paternal instincts kicking in?" Sirius shrugged as he got to his feet and turned to help the others up as well. Still laughing the five of them made their way to the fireplace at 12 Grimmauld Place.

"We'll visit again soon I promise." Sirius told them giving them each a hug and holding out the pot of floo powder. Hermione went through first followed closely by Tonks. Sirius stopped Harry while he was taking his floo powder. "Maybe next time you three can tell us some stories?"

"I'd love too, but we don't have many yet. You already know about the statue, that's pretty much all I got. Professor Flitwick's Office, Hogwarts." Harry said as he threw his floo powder into the fire. Just before he vanished into the flames he smirked over his shoulder. "Well there was that troll I killed too."

Remus and Sirius were staring at the fireplace mouth agape. "Was he serious?"

"No." Remus replied. "He couldn't have been. Could he?"

"I don't know." Sirius said. "But there is a bigger problem that I need to deal with."

"Oh, what's that?" Remus asked.

Sirius looked him in the eye and raised one brow. "I need to get laid."

HPCOC

"Alright men. We have our orders. Failure is not an option. This will take planning. This will take dedication. This will take risk. BUT WE WILL SUCCEED!" The commander smiled as the best of his soldiers stood in front of him cheering. We have to succeed.

HPCOC

Peter's trial was held a couple weeks later and he was quickly and quietly shipped off to Azkaban to serve his life sentence in the cell that he had wrongly put Sirius in. Harry had been so happy he was bubbly until he heard the sentence. Then he was passed bubbly, he was so happy he could fly. In fact that's just what he was doing.

It was early morning on one of the first days of March and Harry had spent part of the night flying around the quidditch pitch on a broom he took from the school shed. His jubilation was evident, the broom was just for show, of course, and Harry was flying far faster than that broom could. It wasn't all about speed though, Harry was a born seeker and right now while not paying attention to anything he was pulling off moves that would make Victor Krum look like a little kid, not that anyone knew who Victor Krum was yet, he's still only fourteen.

Naturally in Harry's life, he is never alone. Tonks and Hermione found him shortly after they would have normally woken him up, they later claim to have looked out a window. They didn't say anything though when they saw how he was flying.

Harry just pulled out of an upside down Wronski Feint and was casually flying upside down across the pitch with his back brushing the grass when he heard the tail end of Hermione's scream. Within the blink of an eye he had righted himself and was shooting straight towards her wand drawn. He slowed down when he saw that they weren't in danger and calmly flew over. "Hey."

"Hey." Tonks said stunned.

"HARRY POTTER! What were you thinking?" Hermione demanded.
"I thought you were going to die. Don't scare me like that again."

"I was thinking that I was alone and with no one witnessing I wouldn't be scaring anyone." Harry said. "Don't tell Sirius."

"I won't." Hermione said like he was stupid before reverting to angry.
"But you need to try-"

She was cut off by the sound of applause. The three turned and saw the whole Ravenclaw team flying over to them. Harry groaned and put his face in his hands. "Why god? Why did they have to see?"

"Harry!" Called out the nameless 6th year boy who was serving as team captain. "That was amazing!"

"Thrilling even." Roger Davies added.

"Shut up Roger." The captain said. "Look next year is my last year before I graduate. I really want to win the Quidditch Cup before I do. What do you say?"

"Uh...good luck?" Harry said with a questioning look to Tonks.

"No Harry, I'm offering you a spot on my team next year." The captain said.

"Oh." Harry said.

"Excellent, I'll talk to Flitwick to see if I can start training you this year." The captain said obviously excited, the rest of the team looked excited too, except for the current seeker.

"Why would you do that?" Harry asked sounding confused.

"It is never too soon to start training." The captain replied confused.

"Before I accept the position is too soon." Harry said.

"Why wouldn't you accept the slot?"

"Why would I want to?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm not accepting the position on your team."

"B-but why?" The captain seemed on the verge of tears.

Oh great, another fanatic. Harry thought. "Because seeker is easily the worst position on the team."

"..."

"Not to mention that Quidditch is the stupidest sport ever invented by someone over the age of ten."

"..."

"Hello?" Harry asked waving his hand in front of the captain's face.

"..."

"Can I trust you to put this broom back in the shed?" Harry asked the rest of the team who just nodded dumbly. "Good, now then, it's breakfast time, I'm going to eat. Hermione? Nym?"

Each girl took the arm he offered them and together the three of them walked off the pitch leaving a stunned team behind them. As the trio walked away Tonks' voice drifted back. "I don't know if we ever set stakes for our bet on who was the better flier, but you just won."

HPCOC

"Sir, I have found the blueprints."

"Excellent." He said returning his subordinate's salute. "Now to plan the ambush."

HPCOC

"I still can't believe you can handle your broom so well Harry." Hermione said.

Snicker.

"I would think that with how long and hard it is you would have a hard time maneuvering it."

Snort.

"If it were me I would have lost control really quickly at that speed and made a mess all over everything."

"BAHAHAHAHAHA" Harry and Tonks lost it.

"Why are you laughing?" Hermione asked completely bewildered as her friends had to lean on each other to keep from falling down. Hermione really didn't think there was anything funny about dying in a quidditch accident.

HPCOC

"Headmaster!" A portrait called from the wall suddenly.

"What?" Dumbledore asked irritably as the house of cards he had been delicately making since he woke up came crashing down around him.

"I was just at the quidditch pitch a moment ago." The portrait said gasping for breath. "Someone was flying alone before dawn, I didn't pay any attention until I heard a girl scream." The portrait paused as Dumbledore gathered up his wand. "That isn't important though. When I got to a frame close enough to hear I heard the Ravenclaw team captain offer Harry Potter a spot on the line up next year. I came as quickly as I could."

"What about the girl who was screaming?" Dumbledore asked still concerned.

"Oh, right, she was yelling at Harry when I got there, I believe that he did something dangerous while she was watching." The portrait said. "No one was hurt."

"Oh good. Thank you for telling me, you may go now." Dumbledore started pacing. So Harry is going to be seeker next year, good this will give me something else I can threaten him with if he misbehaves.

HPCOC

By dinner the whole Ravenclaw team and most of the older Ravenclaws were looking at him like a betrayer. The Hufflepuffs team looked concerned, probably thinking he might be coerced or something. The Slytherins looked skeptical and the Gryffindors looked on in disbelief. Ron and Oliver looked like Harry had personally insulted their mothers. Hermione, Tonks and Harry rarely received as many glares from the Great Hall as they did that night. They sat down meekly at the end of the table.

Tonks and Hermione had their customary places at Harry's sides, and no one else was near them. Until, that is, Susan and Hannah crossed the room and sat down across from Harry and gave him a big smile. "Everyone knows you know."

"What else could I expect from Hogwart's?" Harry asked rhetorically.

"A complete lack of understanding"

"And severe over reaction"

"Leading to baseless assumptions"

"And inadvertent offense." The twins said as they sat down on to the side of the Hufflepuffs.

"I said 'What else'." Harry said. "I didn't need you to clarify what I got."

"Harry."

"I'm going to be honest."

"I think you're insane."

"And that I would insist"

"That I would be locked up"

"If I ever did"

"Anything as insane"

"As turning down a free spot on the team."

"But that being said."

"This doesn't change anything between the two of us." The finished together.

"Uh, do you mean you and me, and you and me?" He asked pointing to each twin in turn. "Or between the two of you?"

"Between you and me" They said together.

"Good, because I would hate to be the reason a team like the two of you would break up." Harry said. "I'm not a home wrecker."

The group was laughing when a voice spoke up from behind them.
"Oy, Tonks, switch spots with Potter."

"Why should I?" Tonks demanded as she swung around to level a glare at whomever it was being so presumptuous.

"Because with the two of us joining you." Daphne said indicating herself and Blaise. "You'll have equal representation of all the houses in Harry's court. And if you switch spots then we will all be arranged in a neat and orderly fashion."

"Harry's court?" Hermione asked.

"There isn't a real name for it, that was just the first that came to mind." Daphne explained.

"I still don't know what you meant by that." Hermione responded.

"It's just that all eight of us are here for Harry's support today." Daphne said. "Today, at least, we are here for him, ergo his court."

"Oh." Hermione said.

"Now move it pipsqueak." Daphne said to Tonks with a jerk of her thumb.

"Oh fine." Tonks said standing up.

HPCOC

Dumbledore watched on as Harry's friends gathered for their celebration of Harry's new position. It was obvious that his involvement was supposed to be a surprise, otherwise there would have been applause when he walked through the doors. Albus could see the admiration the rest of the Ravenclaws had for Harry, he couldn't attest to their acting skills though.

You could tell which people had been let in on the secret. In their efforts to hide their reactions they fell into a common novice trap. Most of the house was pretending so hard to look like they didn't care that some of them were over acting and look disappointed. Perhaps we should start an acting club. He thought.

HPCOC

"Are you working on potions Harry?" Tonks asked across the table in the common room. "I could really use some help."

"Sure, no problem." Harry said setting his open notebook down on the table. "What's the problem?"

"It's this calming draught." Tonks said while Harry walked behind her and look down over he shoulder. "I don't know or care why we have to stir the daffodil extract 13 times counter clockwise with a clockwise rotation on the 7th."

"Well it is based on how it will interact with the rabbits fur, you see--" Harry was cut off.

"OOOOOH I get it!" Hermione shouted laughing. "I was accidentally making penis jokes!"

HPCOC

Dumbledore was walking back to his office when he heard Flitwick and McGonagall talking around the corner.

"Minerva, did you hear about what Harry did this morning." Flitwick asked excitedly.

"Yes, it is a shame he declined the spot on the team." Minerva replied.

"It is isn't it." Flitwick replied.

Now there is an actor. Dumbledore thought. He really sounds like Harry isn't on the team. Him turning it down is a good cover story. Filius must really want to keep this advantage.

HPCOC

"I think that's everything." He said pleased with how quickly his troops formed a plan of attack. "We hit tonight while no one is expecting it."

HPCOC

Harry was still awake in the common room a few hours later. There were others but they had all fallen asleep with books in their laps. It was a fairly common occurrence with the claws. It wasn't their fault that it was so hard to stop reading sometimes. A prefect normally woke everyone up gently and would send them to bed around three in the morning when they were returning from their rounds.

Harry didn't have the luxury of falling asleep with a book in his lap tonight because at some point Hermione and Tonks had each claimed a leg as their pillow. Harry wasn't sure when, he was finally coming down the home stretch with his calculations. Aside from the time required to do the carving and spell casting all that would remain when he finished these final calculations would be the dementor's bone. Soon he would have a fully functioning Horcrux Detector.

It took him over two months but now he knew which runes and which charms he would need. Completely oblivious to the girls sleeping on him as well as all of the other Ravenclaws asleep in the room Harry jumped to his feet. "FINALLY IT'S DONE!"

HPCOC

"There is the target. ATTACK!"

HPCOC

Harry was glad that none of the other first year boys had fallen asleep downstairs today. The dorm room was his refuge now. Tonks and Hermione were mad at him for flinging them unceremoniously to the floor. The other claws that were down there were mad at him for shouting. Harry had been in the middle of groveling for the forgiveness of the girls when he noticed a number of students gathering around him. Knowing that he was facing a losing fight Harry did the only logical thing. He grabbed his notebook and fled as fast as he could.

HPCOC

He was looking over his troops. It had been a very successful attack. The enemy was completely restrained and he only lost five of his men in the effort. He watched the surgeon walk towards him with the large silver knife. He smiled as the surgeon reached him.

"Now," The surgeon started. "Which bone does Harry Potter Sir want?"

Marny's eyes grew wide and filled with tears. "I-I-I don't know."

"It's okay, we'll just take them all." The surgeon elf replied happily and went to work.

HPCOC

"Psst."

Harry kept walking.

"Psst. Harry Potter Sir."

This made Harry stop and look around. Finally he saw an elf at the corner. "Go ahead you two. I need to use the loo."

"Okay Harry." Hermione said.

"But this had better not be because you want to hide from everyone you woke up last night." Tonks said.

"It isn't because of that." Harry said walking off down the hall. He turned when he heard the sound of footsteps behind him and saw his girls following him. "Seriously go ahead, I'm not going to pull a runner."

"We don't mind waiting Harry." Tonks said.

"Boys are quick anyway." Hermione added and Tonks nodded.

"Fine, but you're staying out in the hall." Harry said turning slightly red.

"Fair enough." Tonks replied as they resumed their walk.

"And I'm going to lock the door."

"Now you're just being paranoid." Hermione said. "Why would we want to go into the boy's bathroom."

"You'll understand when you're older." Tonks said and Harry nodded.

"WHAT? I'm older than both of you!" Hermione said.

"Blah blah, semantics." Tonks said dismissively.

When they reached the bathroom Harry went in and cast a locking and silence charm on the door and checked for other occupants. Finding that he was alone Harry warped to the Room of Requirements. "Marny!"

The elf popped in with a loud crack bring a crate with him. "Marny has brought your dementor's bone, Harry Potter Sir."

"Excellent." Harry said and flicked his wand to remove the top of the crate. When he saw the full skeleton his jaw dropped. "I only needed one. Where did you get these? I thought they were expensive."

"There weren't any on the market. I had to go straight to the source." Marny said.

"The source? You mean a dementor?"

"Yes, it only cost us five elves to subdue it too."

"So you killed a dementor and harvested its bones...wait what do you mean 'cost us five elves'?"

"You can't kill a dementor Harry Potter Sir. We just collected the bones. And I meant that five of us lost our lives." Marny said proudly. "We did rather well if you ask me."

Harry's mind was reeling from what he had just been told. On his orders five elves lost their lives and a creature had all of its bones removed without the mercy of death. Harry marked a 5 on the box and told Marny to store it with the other boxes and warped back to the bathroom.

HPCOC

"Harry what's wrong?" Hermione cried as a very green looking Harry came out of the bathroom.

"Whatever you do when you're in the presence of a house-elf" Harry started. "Never, ever, utter the phrase 'I don't care what it takes.'"

The girls shared a worried glance as Harry started to make his way back to the Great Hall. Tonks was the first to start to follow him, and despite really not wanting to know she had to ask. "Harry? What were you doing with a house-elf in the bathroom?"

HPCOC

Harry had decided to leave off making his Horcrux Detector until summer. Right now it wouldn't really do anything other than confirm the one in his head and the diadem, but that could wait. He had to have it done before the Weasleys would be going school shopping though. This way he doesn't have to worry about anyone stumbling in on him working either.

The only interesting thing that happened was Harry getting a letter from Sirius about halfway through the month informing Harry that Sirius had met someone and they were dating now. Sirius said that they wanted to keep the relationship quiet for now at least and that Harry would be told who it was over the summer if things were still looking good at that point.

Between not having anything to actively work on and attempting to avoid the quidditch captain every time he came to recruit Harry, the team was even to the point of trying to bribe him, Harry was growing very impatient.

It was an impatient Harry that found himself in DADA towards the end of March. He was just sitting there, like he had all year, sending Quirrell the death glare, when Quirrell met his eye. Harry didn't stop to think and just dove into Quirrell's mind trying to find out what Voldemort knows right now. He breezed through Quirrell's defenses like they weren't even there and found Voldemort. With a mental smirk he reached out to attack when he realized his mistake.

When Harry's mind touched Voldemort's everything went white and Harry experienced the worst pain of his life.

The last thing he heard before his world faded to black was Hermione and Tonks shouting Harry's name.

AN:

So I have decided how I am going to roll with the animagus thing, and everyone important has a short list of 2 or 3 potential shapes along with potentially no shape. Thanks for everyone's input.

I am going to re-write this chapter at some point along with the first couple of chapters, I don't know when but it will happen. I'm also changing the title of this chapter, sorry this one is so bad.

Voldemort's patience was wearing thin. He'd been stuck in this damned body for months now. He had managed to get the passwords to bypass all of the protections on the stone except for the Cerberus Even now though he had a plot to get the half-giant drunk and woo him with the live dragon's egg that was in his quarters. Normally Voldemort would just destroy everything in his path but Quirrell's body was barely in a state to wield magic at all. The point being that once he exceeded Quirrell's capacity the body Voldemort was using would fall apart, and Voldemort didn't know how long that would take, it could be moments or it could be months. It was prudent not to risk it, unless he could get a new body.

Quirrell was stuttering again, it was hard for him not to just say what Voldemort was thinking. Quirrell was pathetically weak minded. If Voldemort was honest with himself he would have to admit that he needed a weak human mind to get back into the swing of possession. In his prime Voldemort was a master of the art of possession, but his long years in Albania inhabiting the minds of lower animals weakened his skills dramatically. His next victim won't stutter.

Voldemort was interrupted from his musing by the sensation of someone blowing through Quirrell's semi-existent mental barriers, it wasn't hard at all, and run straight into Voldemort. Voldemort looked through Quirrell's eyes to see his attacker.

POTTER! Voldemort thought mentally laughing maniacally as he launched his counter attack. Your body is mine!

HPCOC

Defense Against the Dark Arts was dragging on and on. Tonks was ready to get out of there and go do something fun with Harry, and Hermione. She sighed quietly as she glanced over to her best friends. Someday Harry will look at a girl and be ready for more than flirting. She thought. The question is will be be looking at me or Hermione?

She turned her attention back to the front of the class just as Quirrell turned and looked directly at the three of them. She knew something bad was about to happen when he smirked. Just then she heard Harry scream in pain while his scar ripped open and sprayed blood on the students in front of them.

"HARRY!" Tonks and Hermione screamed together, catching Harry before he fell off his chair. Hermione took his head in her lap as they lowered him to the floor and held him steady, so he wouldn't get hurt while he was writhing about in pain. As Hermione tore a piece of her robes off to wipe the blood away she called out for someone to fetch Madam Pomfrey.

"What did you do to him?" Tonks demanded as she stood up and turned to face Quirrell, only to find him on the floor in a similar state. She watched for a few moments before he stopped thrashing suddenly. "Hermione, how's he doing?"

"He just stopped struggling." Hermione called back. "I think he passed out."

"Same here." Tonks said wishing that Quirrell was still in pain for attacking Harry. With a glare of contempt she walked away to rejoin Hermione at Harry's side. She took one of his hands and held it in her lap, crying gently while she watched him.

A few minutes later Madam Pomfrey bustled in. With a gesture she had Tonks and Hermione help lift Harry's shoulders up so she could clean and bandage his head. With that done she cast a couple quick diagnostic charms on both Harry and Quirrell before moving them onto conjured stretchers. She sent the same boy who found her to go find Dumbledore and have him meet her in the hospital wing. "Class dismissed."

"Are they going to die?" One of the students asked causing Tonks and Hermione to sob.

"Their lives are in no immediate threat." Madam Pomfrey said. "Beyond that I am bound by oath not to divulge any information without my patient's consent."

Madam Pomfrey levitated the stretchers in front of her as she left the room, Tonks and Hermione close on her heals. Pomfrey allowed them to continue after deciding that there were more important things than getting them to leave. When they arrived Pomfrey sent the girls, with a basin, to fetch some water and towels and set them to the task of cleaning up the rest of Harry's blood after she settled

him into a bed. She had just finished settling Quirrell in when Dumbledore came through the doors.

"What is it Poppy?" He asked as he approached the beds.

"See for yourself." She said and waived her wand, causing a black smoky band to appear connecting Harry's scar to Quirrell's head.

"Merlin." The headmaster said and quickly cast a few spells of his own. Hermione and Tonks were watching, and started crying again when Dumbledore sighed and shook his head.

"So it's what I feared then?" Madam Pomfrey asked.

"I'm afraid so." Dumbledore said. "But at least he is fighting it. I must start my search for the relevant books."

"What is it?" Hermione asked as Dumbledore quickly walked out of the room.

"It is one of two things." Madam Pomfrey said quietly. "Either Professor Quirrell is trying to possess Harry, or something that is possessing Professor Quirrell is trying to possess Harry."

"Can't you do something about it?" Tonks asked.

"Not right now." Pomfrey said. "The two minds involved have fought to a draw. Anything we might do could upset the balance in unforeseeable ways. That's why the headmaster is researching."

"So all we can do is wait?" Hermione asked indignantly.

"And watch." Pomfrey said.

HPCOC

So they waited and watched. Tonks and Hermione would be at Harry's side whenever they weren't in class. The two of them took their homework with them and while they were doing it Tonks would tell Harry about the day. Sometimes Hermione would read chapters aloud so Harry could hear. They had no idea whether or not it would help Harry but they knew it wouldn't hurt. The other students that Daphne had called 'Harry's Court' were frequent visitors. On

occasion another Gryffindor or Ravenclaw would stop in. Generally the time flowed by quietly. At the beginning of April the eight of them gathered at Harry's bed for a small birthday celebration for the twins. Even years later Molly Weasley didn't believe that the two of them could celebrate anything without several explosions.

There were no Defense classes for a week while a temporary replacement arrived. Auror Shacklebolt had been lent to the school by the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. He was a better teacher than Quirrell, but that was mainly because he didn't stutter. He was like-able enough but wasn't much of a people person. The older classes had better things to say about him, they related better with him and they were working on dueling, one of an Auror's specialties.

The rumors of what happened flew around Hogwarts, of course. In one version of the story Quirrell attacked Harry, who used ancient magic to melt Quirrell's brain, eye witnesses saw it leaking out of his ears, and fell into a coma from the magical backlash. The most absurd version has Harry and Quirrell dueling for an hour before Harry subdued him. Hermione and Tonks never told anyone what they had been told, and glared daggers at anyone who thought to mention it to them.

HPCOC

"Well well." Theodore Nott said as he caught up to Tonks and Hermione one night on their way back to Ravenclaw Tower. "If it isn't the mudblood and the metawhole."

"If it isn't the rat and the pug." Tonks said as she turned around nodding at Nott and Pansy respectively.

"And their handler?" Hermione inquired pointedly to Tracy Davis.

"Someone has to keep that dog on a leash." Tonks said laughing as they moved to push past the Slytherin trio.

"Where do you think you're going?" Nott demanded.

"Our dorms. Where did you think?" Tonks retorted.

"But we're not done with you yet." Pansy said.

"What are you going to do to us?" Hermione asked.

"Oh, the mudblood's scared." Tracy taunted.

"Not so tough now that you don't have Potter huh?" Nott added smirking.

"Of course not you idiot." Tonks started. "Any group of three is tougher when one member isn't injured. If Harry and Hermione switched places we still wouldn't be as tough."

"Tonks I don't think you're helping." Hermione said slightly nervous.

"Don't worry Hermione." Tonks said with a self assured smile. "Even without Harry we're still more than a match for these three."

"Why don't we find out?" Nott said drawing his wand.

"Okay." Tonks said and stepped towards him. With two quick motions she snapped her hand out and pluck Nott's wand from his hand, then threw it down the hallway in the other direction. "Dueling Lesson Number One: Don't drop your wand. Go fetch puginson."

Laughing Tonks grabbed Hermione's hand and pulled her away from the Slytherins quickly, they just got around the next corner before Pansy and Tracy got over their shock and started shooting spells at them. As they moved down the hall they heard Nott's voice call out to them "You'll pay for that bitch!"

"I didn't know Pansy was in heat." Hermione commented and they both broke into loud laughter, which made it back to the angry Slytherins, who fortunately chose to look for Nott's wand rather than pursue their prey. "We have to remember to tell Harry this story when he wakes up though."

"Yeah," Tonks said smiling. "but we can tell the rest of the Ravenclaws first."

HPCOC

"Professor?" Shacklebolt asked as he entered the headmaster's office.

"Yes Kingsley?" Dumbledore asked.

"I found something in Quirrell's rooms that you might want to know about." Shacklebolt said unshrinking a large box.

"A dragon's egg?" The headmaster observed as Shacklebolt took the lid off.

"A live dragon's egg." Shacklebolt confirmed. "We have no idea why he has it or how he got it, but something needs to be done with it."

"We can't just let it die." Dumbledore said.

"I was thinking that we could send it off to one of the dragon reserves."

"We could, it might not live through the journey though. High atmosphere is cold you know." Albus said shaking his head. "It will be better for the baby to hatch first."

"Someone will need to tend to it then, it's lucky that it has survived the abuse it's received already." Shacklebolt said.

"I think I know who would be more than willing to help." Dumbledore said with a smile. "Come, let's visit Hagrid."

"Alright, but if he agrees I'll have to send a letter off to the ministry before we can hand the egg over." Shacklebolt said. "The DRCMC might want it too."

"I suppose we should give the ministry preference." Dumbledore said. "Very well, we'll ask Hagrid to care for the egg on the condition that the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures doesn't want it."

"Sounds like a plan." Shacklebolt said with a resigned sigh. "Let's go now, I still have more of Quirrell's things to go through before bedtime."

HPCOC

The end of April was approaching, Hagrid had named the hatchling Norbert and showed the baby dragon to every Care of Magical Creatures class several times. Hagrid was so happy with Norbert that it almost broke Dumbledore's heart to insist that the dragon be sent to Romania. Charlie Weasley and a couple of his colleagues with siblings in Hogwart's were going to be arriving the next day for a visit and dragon removal. Hagrid was busy packing Norbert's crate with his favorite teddy bear and several days worth of dead animals.

In the hospital wing Tonks and Hermione were just settling down next to Harry's bed to start their Potions essay. "Classes haven't been the same this last month." Tonks said. "Wake up soon Harry."

"We all miss you." Hermione added.

"And you're wasting a perfectly good bed." Madam Pomfrey said coming through the curtains, drawing a glare from the girls. "Hey, it's how I got his mother to leave the few times she was injured."

The girls giggled while Madam Pomfrey did her diagnostics. They both stopped immediately when they heard her sharp intake of breath. She performed the diagnostic charms on Quirrell and turned to the girls. "The connection is getting weaker. I'll have to get Albus down here to confirm but we might be able to start trying some of the breaking methods he's been researching."

"We're getting Harry back?" Tonks squealed and threw her arms around Hermione, who was smiling like the Cheshire Cat.

"They're still fighting, even if I am right." Pomfrey said. "It looks better now than a month ago but we still can't say. Excuse me, I'm going to go get Albus."

HPCOC

That night after curfew Hermione sneaked out of the girls dorms and carefully made her way down to the hospital wing. It would have been much easier if Harry left his trunk unlocked so she could use the map. She felt weird doing this alone. Actually she felt weird sneaking around at all, breaking the rules was very contrary to her nature. This really showed the influence that Harry and Tonks had on her.

Hermione's theory seemed ridiculous, even to her, but she was willing to do ridiculous things to get Harry to wake up. Nothing she had read or heard since joining the magical world told her that this would work, but she couldn't shake the feeling that it would. Every once in a while even the most logical had to do something on instinct.

The doors to the wing were unlocked, they always were in Hermione's experience. She padded quietly over to where Harry was lying. He looked so peaceful in the moonlight. She just stood there watching him for a minute before deciding to act before she got caught. Blushing profusely she bent over and kissed him briefly on the lips. Straightening up again she watched him for any sign of movement, then went rushing out of the wing completely embarrassed, half because she thought that would work, and half because it didn't.

"Where were you?" Tonks asked as Hermione came back into the dorm room.

"Um, bathroom." Hermione said looking away.

"For twenty minutes?" Tonks asked eyebrow raised.

"Um, yeah." Hermione confirmed.

"What were you doing in the bathroom for so long?" Tonks asked.

"You really don't want to know, but my stomach doesn't feel so bad anymore." Hermione said and scooted in under her covers.

"Er, good point. Thanks for not telling." Tonks said. "It's good that you feel better, wake me up if you need help though, and talk to Madam Pomfrey in the morning when we see her."

"Okay Tonks." Hermione said yawning. "Night."

"Night." Tonks said. Night Harry.

HPCOC

Sirius looked up as Dumbledore walked in. He was with the girls and Harry a few days after the kiss, which seemed to have no effect to

Hermione's displeasure. The girls were pouring over their transfiguration notes while Tonks tried to explain a concept to Hermione. Tonks was the best at transfiguration in their class, well other than Harry but that isn't saying much.

"Sirius, could I have a word?" Dumbledore asked.

"Sure." Sirius said getting up and following Dumbledore out of the room. "What's going on?"

"I was just thinking about your living conditions." Dumbledore said eyes twinkling.

"What about them?" Sirius asked crossing his arms.

"It's just that with you just coming out of an extended stay in Azkaban." Dumbledore started. "When Harry wakes up he'll need special care. I'm not sure the two of you can give each other the care you will both need."

"What are you getting at?" Sirius asked.

"I don't want to be presumptuous but if Harry is awake at the end of term maybe he should go back to the Dursleys." Albus said. "They are the people most familiar with him, and this way both of you can focus on healing without your obligations to each other impeding your progress."

"I don't think Harry is going to like that." Sirius said.

"Your job as guardian is to do what's best for Harry, not what he'll like the most." Dumbledore said. "He might be mature for his age but he is still an eleven year old boy. He'll need a firm authority figure."

"You're probably right." Sirius sighed. "I'll talk to him when he wakes up, he will get to make his case against it too."

"Just be careful." Albus said. "Harry has a reputation for being very convincing when he wants to be."

"Are you saying my godson will try to manipulate me?" Sirius asked.

"No, my apologies, I didn't think about how that sounded." Dumbledore said That is exactly what I'm saying you fool.

"Just don't do it again." Sirius replied coldly.

"I won't."

HPCOC

Voldemort was so ashamed. In his initial thrust for control over Harry he landed in a trap. For weeks the two of them fought for dominance, Voldemort gave up on that a few days ago, now he was trying to get free. How is an eleven year old this tough? He asked himself repeatedly over the last month. He was finally making some leeway though, just a little while longer and Voldemort would have Quirrell stuck in the trap and his body will be free for Voldemort to control.

A couple weeks later, halfway through May, Voldemort finally got free. He sat up with a smile and looked around. He was in the hospital wing curtained off. He could hear people on the other side of the curtain. That must be where the boy is, I'll deal with him after I get the stone. He'll be stuck here until this body dies.

Voldemort climbed out of bed and picked up Quirrell's wand. He cast a quick illusion of Quirrell still in bed and left the hospital wing. He moved quickly to avoid detection and made his way up to the bathroom on the second floor. He quickly supplied a password in parseltongue and slid down the pipe. He would have taken the stairs if he wasn't in such a rush.

Striding rapidly down the hallway to the Chamber of Secrets he paused to shore up some failing masonry, never too careful after all. The Chamber of Secrets looked the same as it had all those years ago and the basilisk responded to the same command.

"Come my precious, I have a job for you." Voldemort said. A few minutes later the basilisk was sliding up a pipe that lead to near the third floor corridor with Voldemort riding on its neck. Voldemort slid off the basilisk when they got there and he sent the basilisk on its way to take care of its task.

Voldemort still didn't know the easy way passed the Cerberus but at this point it didn't matter. He walked through the door and started

blasting his way through the obstacles. When he finally made it to the stone room he was so exhausted that he didn't notice the invisible figure waiting for him.

HPCOC

Twenty minutes later in the hospital wing Harry surprised everyone when he suddenly sat up. "Where's Quirrell?"

AN:

I had Harry turn down Quidditch just to get that scene out of the way. It would be easy and boring with his abilities and experience. It would also be completely contradictory to Harry's goals.

Harry's goals being:

- 1 Unite the school (favor for Hat)
- 2 Deal with Voldemort in the most elegant way possible, live up to fame.
- 3 Make Voldy and Dumbles look minor by comparison.

Together that results in wanting to be known as the greatest wizard ever, and therefore taking Merlin's place. Harry, Voldemort and Dumbledore all have the same goal, unlike most manipulative!Dumbledore stories I've seen where Harry just wants to be done with it all or maybe get revenge.

By my standards:

(this) Harry is Evil but not Dark

Dumbledore is Light and Evil (and sometimes senile)

Voldemort is Dark and Evil

I see those distinctions to be very important. What is equally important though is that all three of them are also charismatic psychopaths.

Another thing that got mentioned was the number system on the boxes. Harry is choosing the numbers arbitrarily and has it listed inventory style in the notebook that he has been using along with the notes on the Horcrux Detector and all of the notes from Future Harry on Horcruxes in general, everything in said notebook is in parselscript, the girls haven't seen the inside of it yet.

The group referenced as 'Harry's Court' will be the important characters throughout the whole narrative, at least that's what I have planned, with the later addition of Luna, for a core group of 10 characters. I don't intend to continue to call them that though.

Harry surprised everyone when he suddenly sat up. "Where's Quirrell?"

"HARRY!" Hermione and Tonks screamed as they knocked him back down, hugging him tightly.

"I've missed you too." Harry said hugging them back. "But where's Quirrell?"

"He's in the next bed, still unconscious." Madam Pomfrey said pulling the curtains back so Harry could see. The three preteens sat up as one and looked at Quirrell strongly resembling meerkats in the process. No one other than Harry heard the quiet hiss of a whispered messenger spell.

"Well, I have to go." Harry said springing out from between the girls. He grabbed his wand and the time turner from the table next to his bed, ignoring the pile of clothes for now.

"Harry wait!" Madam Pomfrey cried as Harry ducked around her protesting arms to get out.

"Sorry no time." Harry said. "Oh and that's not Quirrell."

Harry sprinted a few more steps before he staggered and had to grab onto a bed for support. He took a few deep breaths and stood back up. "I'm okay, I just stood up too fast."

"You two go after him, I have to firecall the headmaster." Madam Pomfrey said, she was in no condition to chase after a spry lad in his youth. Just then the emergency bells started ringing calling all students to their dorms and all professors to the entrance hall. Poppy Pomfrey's job now was to prepare for the injured.

HPCOC

"Harry!" Tonks yelled as the boy rounded a corner just in front of them. "You need to go back to the hospital."

"NEVER!" Harry shouted defiantly cackling evilly just as the bells started tolling.

"Harry! There is an emergency, please stop." Hermione pleaded as they rounded the corner to find an empty hall. "Harry?"

"Well, now what?" Tonks asked as they looked around for hiding places quickly.

"There he is!" Hermione said pointing at Harry running down a flight of stairs a few floors above them. "Where did he get that sword?"

"Come on, if we're quick we can catch up to him." Tonks said and ran off.

HPCOC

"NEVER!" Harry yelled over his shoulder cackling gleefully. He quickly disillusioned himself and just before he warped away he saw the girls run around the corner. His warp landed him in Dumbledore's office just as the door was slamming closed. There were three tea cups on the desk still more than half full of tea. Looks like they got interrupted.

Harry walked over to a shelf and was just reaching for the Sorting Hat when the fireplace roared green. Harry froze instantly but relaxed when He heard Madam Pomfrey's voice. "Albus are you there? Albus, it's Harry, he's run off. Oh you're probably heading down to the emergency already." and the connection closed.

Without wasting any time Harry grabbed the hat and stuffed it onto his head. Hat! I need the sword!

Coming right up. The hat replied, not needing to be told which sword. Harry felt the pommel of the sword hit his head just like last time, but now with his new hammer resistant skull there was no dizziness associated with the event. He pulled the hat off his head while he drew Gryffindor's Sword out of it. With a quick thank you the hat was back on his shelf and Harry was running down the stairs and out the passed the gargoyle dropping his disillusionment along the way.

Harry knew that the teachers would be grouping up in the entrance hall, so he took a different path that would lead to a side door. Down the stairs he ran, ignoring countless people's advice about sharp objects.

"Harry!" Tonks shouted as she and Hermione caught up to him on the stairs. "Where are you going?"

"Hogsmeade!" Harry said with a grin.

"Why?" Hermione panted.

"I have a thousand year old monster to slay." Harry said. "Come on."

"Where did you get that sword?" Hermione asked.

"It was just lying around somewhere." Harry said. "The Sorting Hat summoned it for me."

"Isn't the hat in Dumbledore's office?" Hermione wheezed.

"You should probably stop talking before you pass out." Harry said clinically. "And yes, that's where I went when you lost me. Remember HOPS 2 or something, shortcuts."

"Huh?" Tonks grunted.

"Shortcuts, got me to the office fast and all that." Harry said as they burst onto the grounds. "You two might want to stop, there is a good chance of this thing killing someone."

"What is it?" Tonks asked.

"A Basilisk!" Harry said. "Should be fun."

"How do you know all this?" Hermione asked. "You've been unconscious for a month and a half."

"I got a message just after I woke up with instructions." Harry said. "You probably didn't hear it." And you definitely didn't understand it. Harry thought to himself.

"So why do you have to kill it?" Tonks asked.

"Because I'm Harry Potter." Harry said. "It's in the job description."

They ran in silence for a few more minutes before reaching the edge of the village. They could hear screams and smashing wood and ran towards it. "You two should really stay back." Harry said.

"We're staying with you!" Tonks declared.

"Do you know how to fight a basilisk?" Harry asked.

"Well, no." Tonks said.

"Then you can't be much help." Harry said. "I'm sorry but you'll just be in needless danger."

"Alright, but we're going to watch." Hermione said as she came to a stop just around the corner from the monster.

"Alright, but use this." Harry said conjuring a mirror for them. "Worst case now at least you'll only be petrified."

"Okay, good luck Harry." Hermione said hugging him.

"Don't die." Tonks added giving him a peck on the cheek as she hugged him too.

"No worries." Harry said smiling as they let go of him. He turned and darted around the corner screaming at the top of his lungs "FOR HOGSMEADE!"

At that sound some of the citizens of Hogsmeade ventured a look out of their windows in time to see an eleven year old boy wearing only a hospital gown running down the street brandishing a sword in one hand conjuring and banishing large stones with the wand in his other hand.

Harry was having fun barely missing the basilisk. He would be hitting it but he had thought of a faster way to end this without getting hurt. He drew close still having missed with all of his shots. Finally when he was close enough he called out in parseltongue, loud enough for the basilisk to hear but not the villagers. "Play along if you want to live." Harry said noting the quick pause in the snake's movements. "I have already destroyed your master, and I'll destroy you too if you don't do what I tell you."

"Foolish human, you think you can threaten me?" The basilisk asked affronted. "I'll eat you."

Harry responded by throwing a powerful cutting curse strong enough to damage the snake despite its hide, causing it to hiss in pain. "I'm not messing around."

"You'll pay for that!" The basilisk said lashing forward to bite him.

Harry responded by conjuring a large chunk of cork and jumping backwards as the basilisk bit into it. The snakes fangs sank deep into the soft wood and while the venom was eating away at the wood it still took the basilisk some time to free its fangs. Harry wasn't about to let this time go to waste, being careful to avoid its eyes Harry closed the distance between himself and the serpent. He took the sword in both hands and brought it down across the basilisk's back severing its spine and paralyzing it from that point to the tip of its tail. Harry had his eyes firmly planted on the ground as he watched the shadow of the snake thrash about in agony, trying to look him in the eye. Fangs still stuck in the cork the basilisk tried the last thing it could think of and simply tried to crush Harry under its head.

Harry watched the shadow rear back to slam him and waited for it to start. The shadow began to mimic the descent of the snake's head and just at the last moment Harry threw himself forward and rolled. Harry got his feet under himself and used his left elbow to turn himself around as he stood up, drawing the sword back for a strike. The basilisk's last effort resulted in Harry having a perfect opening at the base of its skull. Never one to miss an opportunity Harry drove the sword forward with all the strength his body could lend. The basilisk died instantly as the sword separated its skull from its spine. With a few final shudders the basilisk fell still. Well that wasn't the easy way, but it worked. Harry thought to himself.

"Mr. Potter!" A shrill shriek came from a few feet away.

Harry turned on the spot and saw Professors McGonagall, Snape, Flitwick and Dumbledore all staring at him jaws hanging open. Harry smiled at them and released the sword, still in the basilisk's neck. "Um, hello there." Harry said brushing off his now dirty and torn hospital gown.

"But—what-guh" Snape struggled to string words together. "Potter? How?"

"Yes me, and with a sword." Harry said. "Tonks Hermione, it's safe now."

As the girls came out from behind the building Harry took a look around, noting all the faces in the windows. Good, dozens of witnesses, all I have to do is not answer any questions and the story will be everywhere by morning. He thought. Just then a score of house elves popped in each wearing a black leather vest with the initials G.N.I.C.C emblazoned in white lettering on their backs. Harry recognized that their leader was Marny. The house elves quickly staged themselves equally around the corpse.

"NICK LOGISTIC DEPARTMENT, MOVE OUT!" Marny shouted, the rest of the house elves popped away taking the basilisk and the sword with them. Marny turned and saluted Harry before popping away himself.

That was strange. Harry thought to himself before casting the tempus charm and checking the time, 2:14 pm. Just over half an hour left. "Right then, I suppose I'm due back at the hospital wing."

Harry gestured to the girls and started walking back towards the castle. He faked a stumble just at the moment when both girls would have to leap forward to keep him from falling. It's better to pretend to be exhausted now.

A few minutes later with the help of the girls he managed to find his way back to the hospital. "Never fear Poppy, I've dealt with the emergency. Oh, I just realized how many people could have been looking out their windows and accidentally met the gaze. Today's not as glorious as it was five minutes ago."

"It rarely is on days like these." Pomfrey said sadly. "Let's get you back in bed shall we?"

"Are you hitting on me?" Harry asked with a raised eyebrow as he climbed back into his bed and faked a yawn. "Well that will have to wait until I feel more awake." Twenty more minutes.

"Your father said that same basic thing to me many times." Pomfrey said smiling. "I'll be right back with a dreamless sleep potion."

"Harry, I want you to promise me that you'll never do something like that again." Hermione said sternly crossing her arms.

"Yeah, you're no good to anyone dead." Tonks added crossing her arms and glaring angrily.

"Sorry Loves, it's my fate." Harry said with a shrug. "At least I'm ready for it."

"Your fate is to die?" Hermione asked.

"Well everyone's fate is to die. No, my fate is to always find myself in dangerous situations." Harry said. "Like I said, it's in the job description."

"Excuse me Sir!" Madam Pomfrey's voice filtered through the curtains. "You can't just barge in here. I have patients!"

"I'm here to see Harry, I'm sure you've heard of me." The unknown man said with a thick London accent.* "You know me as Nick."

HPCOC

Almost twenty minutes later, at precisely 2:45 pm Harry warped out of the hospital wing just as Dumbledore came into the room and saw him. He couldn't wait to see how grumpy Dumbledore would be about that. Laughing to himself he withdrew his time turner from his robes and spun back six hours.

"Marny!" Harry shouted and a moment later the elf popped in.

"Yes Harry Potter sir?" Marny asked reverently.

"Can you take me to the estate in France and call the rest of the elves in slowly, I don't want to deal with rapid compression again." Harry said before yawning. "Oh, and bring me a pepper up potion. I still have a long day."

Fifteen minutes later Harry found himself standing in front of 131 house elves, ears still steaming. Marny was at his side with a clip

board and a pen. Harry folded his arms behind his back. "Alright, listen up, I need nineteen of you who are the best at transporting large objects in tandem."

He waited as nineteen elves made their way forward and were sent to the side in a group. Harry took off the G.N.I.C.C vest that Nick had given him at Hogwart's. "I need five of you to copy this vest twenty times in house elf size and once identical to the original."

Five elves came forward and took the vest before popping away. "Now then, I need the best twenty of you at procuring potion ingredients and other raw goods to join the transport group. And finally to the rest of you, go figure out something that G.N.I.C.C stands for. I really haven't got the foggiest."

As the majority of the elves popped away Harry walked over to the remaining thirty-nine. "Alright, in a few hours there is going to be a basilisk released in Hogsmeade, I'm going to end up killing it and when I do you forty will be springing into action. I will need the nineteen transporters along with Marny to come to Hogsmeade and retrieve the body and bring it back here for dismantling. The body will be roughly eighty feet long. The twenty of you can go prepare your area, just let the transporters know where to bring the corpse."

Harry waited for the twenty to decide on a location and pop away before he turned to the rest. "Your job is simple. At precisely 2:13 this afternoon you're to pop into Hogsmeade at my location, wearing the vests that your colleagues are making. The nineteen will position themselves around the corpse and wait for Marny to say 'Nick Logistics Department, move out.' and then bring the corpse to wherever the others need it, and offer them any assistance you can, I want the body to be completely processed by morning. Marny, once the sword is clean store it like the others." Harry quickly conjured a sword sized box and marked it 37. "Until two o'clock you can assist the others in their tasks. Marny, could you make me some food?"

Harry walked the house and grounds while he ate thinking about whether or not this would be a good place to have his secret hideout. It really doesn't get much more secret than having the owner and primary occupant not knowing where it is. Harry thought about suppressing the fidelis familia and put up his own fidelis with himself as secret keeper, but then he decided that a rune based beacon

would achieve the same end result without giving him the possibility of spilling the location accidentally.

It was one o'clock when Harry looked down sadly at the foot tall cylinder of wood that he was holding. He finished carving the runes for the end point and painted the circle on the floor, everything looked perfect. The problem was that it was all wood and these runes were likely to destroy themselves. Harry only needed it to work once though because while he was on a time limit today, someday soon he could warp in and carve a real end point out of marble, or maybe quartz if he could find a big enough piece.

He settled the cylinder into place just as Marny popped in holding Harry's vest. "Harry Potter sir. All of the preparations are complete."

"Thank you Marny." Harry said taking the vest with a smile. Harry then cast a quick tempus. "Looks like it's just about show time for me. Do any of the elves have questions about what they're supposed to do?"

"No, sir." Marny said.

"Good, could you also tell the processing crew that I would like to reserve all of the blood and venom along with the skull and twenty percent of the remaining skeleton and twenty percent of the hide?" Harry asked suddenly realizing that he still had a note to write too. He moved to the desk where he had been working and wrote a short, simple note.

Professor McGonagall,

I would like to donate these basilisk parts to a fund to repair and rebuild whatever damage was sustained to Hogsmeade, the remainder is then to be split up amongst any victims' families. Inventory enclosed.

Sincerely,

Harry Potter

"Tomorrow morning I would like you to take the nineteen transporters and wear the vests, then bring the processed parts to Hogwart's Great Hall during breakfast and deliver them to Minerva

McGonagall along with this note and an inventory of what we give them." Harry said folding the note and handing it to Marny. "I've got to run."

A resplendent Harry dressed in dirty and torn hospital robes disillusioned himself and warped to the stone chamber to await the arrival of Quirrell and his head rash. He didn't have to wait long.

A few minutes later Quirrell came rushing into the room and started examining the mirror. He circled the mirror several times muttering to himself, completely stutter free Harry noticed, and casting spells rapidly. Suddenly he stopped completely while standing directly in front of the mirror. Slowly he reached out and sunk his left hand into the depths of the mirror. With a triumphant grin he pulled his arm out and held the ruby stone above his head. "YES!"

Harry had been planning on destroying the fake stone no matter what happened down here. Now Voldemort was holding it up like a target. Harry couldn't help but oblige that sort of generosity and shot an over-powered reducto at it silently. Voldemort screams of triumph turned into screams of rage as the stone was utterly destroyed along with Quirrell's left hand and a lot of his arm. He spun around snarling as Harry dropped his disillusionment.

"POTTER?" Voldemort screeched, he didn't seem to be in any pain.

"Yes?" Harry asked calmly.

"How?" Voldemort asked drawing his wand and silently stopping the blood flow to his ruined arm. "You're should be in the hospital wing."

"Just like you?" Harry asked raising an eyebrow.

"Touche." Voldemort admitted.

"So, what now?" Harry asked.

"I was thinking...Avada Kedavra!" Voldemort shouted launching the first curse in their duel.

Harry moved to the side slightly and let the killing curse fly centimeters from his face while he returned an arc of bone breaking hexes. Quirrell's body dodge clumsily and got struck in the ribs by

one of Harry's spells. "You can't beat me Potter. Quirrell is already dead, I feel no pain." Voldemort said and threw a cruciatus Harry's way.

Harry again moved slightly to get out of the way and sent a spell chain of a Jelly-legs, followed by a disarmer with an incarcerous to finish it off. It took Harry three times through the chain before Voldemort was bound and disarmed.

"Curse this body." Voldemort said as Harry walked over. "It was useless a few months ago, I should have traded up."

"I'm sure." Harry said. "Like you were strong enough to capture anyone other than Quirrell."

"You try being bodiless for ten years and see how you do when you get one back." Voldemort spat at Harry. "So what are you going to do now? Turn me over to the old man?"

Harry scoffed. "No, I'm going to destroy this body, and with your cooperation solve generations worth of debate." When Voldemort made no response Harry continued on. "You see, no one knows where things go when they get vanished. Hopefully you'll be aware long enough to remember."

"WHAT!" Voldemort screamed before Harry hit him with a silencing charm.

"Until next time Tom." Harry said raising his wand again. "Oh, and I also killed your basilisk already."

Harry vanished Quirrell's head before Voldemort could respond and then sat down and cast a messenger spell, speaking in parseltongue. "Harry, it's you from six hours from now. Listen carefully. You're going to get out of bed at the end of this message and head to Dumbledore's office, retrieve the Sword of Gryffindor and then use it to kill Slytherin's Basilisk, it's in Hogsmeade. After the elves leave go back to the Hospital wing and wait for me to arrive. At 2:45 after we've switched places go to France and organize the elves before coming back here to lie in wait for Quirrell. Finally send this message and get ready to go to the Hospital wing."

With the message sent to himself he set about making the battle that took place down here look more cinematic. He blew large chunks out of the wall and reduced large portions of the floor to rubble. He transfigured puddles of water and stone and metal spikes. After adding the corpses of a few conjured animals he nodded to himself and morphed into the image of an American Indian that he had shown Dumbledore all that time ago. He transfigured his clothes and conjured some boots and a cowboy hat before putting on his vest and disillusioning himself. He checked the time and smiled that younger him had just killed the snake. Then he warped off to the Hospital wing to await the next stage.

HPCOC

"You know me as Nick." Harry told Madam Pomfrey as he walked into the Hospital wing to visit himself. He smirked, both of him, as he heard all three girls take a sharp breath. "I see you have heard of me."

"Let him in Poppy!" Younger Harry called from his bed. "We have things to discuss."

"But you need to rest, I have your sleep potion ready and everything." Pomfrey said.

"Just give us fifteen minutes." Young Harry called back.

Older Harry was laughing as he walked into the curtained off section with himself. He smiled to the girls. "Tonks and Hermione I presume?"

"Yes sir." Hermione said, not sure what to make of this new figure.

"Oh, you don't need to call me sir. Nick is fine." Older Harry said smiling at her. "But if you could please excuse us Harry and I need to trade reports privately."

"Okay." Hermione said before looking to Younger Harry, who nodded. "I guess, but we'll be right outside."

"Thanks." Younger Harry said. "It'll only be a few minutes."

As the girls left Older Harry shut the curtains and cast a silencing and privacy ward before looking to his counterpart. "Time for us to switch spots."

Younger Harry nodded and stood up while Older Harry took off his boots, hat and vest. Younger Harry morphed into Nick while Older Harry morphed back into his normal form and a second later they were correcting their clothing. They delayed for a few minutes after Older Harry settled down in bed and Younger Harry, now Nick, put on the vest hat and boots. Older Harry elaborated of a few aspects of the day for Younger Harry and when they were all caught up Younger Harry dropped the wards.

Tonks and Hermione were back inside the curtains almost instantly causing both Harrys to laugh. "Miss me that much already?" Older, bed ridden, Harry asked.

Both girls blushed and Younger Harry chuckled again. "Well I'd best be off." He said opening the curtains just in time to see Dumbledore walk in. He flashed Dumbledore a smile and warped out of the Hospital wing in front of everyone.

"How did he do that?" Dumbledore asked. "I've been trying for years to figure out how to get around the apparition wards here."

"According to Hogwarts: A History it isn't even possible." Hermione said. "You just can't do it."

"No." Harry said smirking. "You just can't do it. Nick can."

"But...How?" Dumbledore asked.

"Can't say." Harry said glumly.

"Anyway, Harry I need to talk to you about what happened today." Dumbledore said.

"It can wait Albus." Madam Pomfrey said handing Harry a vial of dreamless sleep potion. "He needs to take his potion and rest."

"Thank you." Harry said downing the potion in one gulp. "Better ask quick Headmaster. I don't know how long I'll be awake."

"Was Nick involved with anything that happened today?" Dumbledore asked quickly.

"Yes."

"What did he do?"

"He—" Harry paused to yawn eyes tearing up. "Fought Voldemort and prevented him from getting the stone."

"How did Voldemort get here?" Dumbledore asked, both men ignoring the cringes from Tonks and Pomfrey, Hermione had no reflex because of being muggleborn.

"Possessed Quirrell." Harry said slowly, closing his eyes. "That's who I was figh—"

"Harry?" Dumbledore said nudging him slightly. "He's asleep. I suppose the rest of my questions will have to wait for morning."

A disappointed Dumbledore left the Hospital wing while Pomfrey smiled smugly. Tonks and Hermione took their spots at Harry's bedside and didn't leave until curfew, still trying to figure out exactly how they were supposed to be feeling about today.

As evening fell the people of Hogsmeade knew the outcome of the day. Nine people had died from looking in the wrong direction at the wrong time and a further fifteen were petrified. The news had circulated through all of England by that point that Harry Potter had saved the village. Reporters from several magazines and newspapers had shown up through the afternoon to hear peoples' stories and collect any pictures that were taken. The editor of the Quibbler and he daughter were the last people to leave and just before their portkey activated the young Luna Lovegood found herself wondering about Harry Potter.

AN:

Evil Harry: Alright, so a lot of people seem to not understand this, here goes my explanation.

I got a review from BRD man that said:

"Unless you have a different definition of evil and dark than me.
seems more
"chaotic neutral with good leanings" to me so far. Evil being:
"controls
absolutely what it can, destroys/hurts/despoils what it can't. Does so
for
it's own pleasure/glory/revenge/etc without remorse."

This Harry seems more a "control what I can (without destroying all
if I don't
get my way) to make my life and those I like better""

I have the same basic definition. I've said that Harry is out for his
own glory already so the motive part is dealt with, which is the evil
bit in my definition the means are the light/dark axis. That said take
a look at what Harry has done since he re-entered the magical world.

Draco Malfoy :

- 1) First thing Harry did was to tell Draco that Harry didn't care what family he was from and status in the society wouldn't give Draco an advantage.
- 2) Harry violently, aggressively and excessively retaliated for what Draco considered to be a minor insult, thereby making Draco reconsider the severity of the insult.
- 3) Harry removed Draco from his power base and intentionally put him somewhere that would be initially hostile towards him.

Honestly Harry is taking a subtle approach to the task of creating a Wormtail/Lucius hybrid for himself.

Hermione :

He truly likes Hermione and his efforts in her regard were to ensure their friendship and keep her safe. There might be new motives later but I think Hermione and Tonks and probably Sirius are relatively safe from Harry. Harry has however, immediately shown himself to be an intelligent, clear thinker, mysterious and crammed full of things that Hermione wants to know. He basically did everything he could to make her actively seek to engage him in conversation.

Tonks :

He's actually innocent as far as I can remember, there might be something but I would have to re-read everything looking for a line or two.

Teddy Nott and his girls: The chicken incident was a direct analogy to how Harry is going to approach the world at large. He knew what was going to happen and he could see everything that was happening and despite what he said his sole reason to go to the trophy room that night is so that people would know he got caught by Nott's trap and could have his vengeance on the 'bad guy'. Harry got an hour's worth of detention willingly and returned the favor by giving the other person involved months worth of shame and embarrassment. On top of that Harry did it as publicly as he could and did nothing to prevent the suspicion from falling on himself either, saying to the rest of the student body 'I can get away with anything, don't mess with me.'

In the end though, he intimidated the whole school, ruthlessly and publicly destroyed the reputation of an enemy and flaunted the rules while still looking like the wronged party and the good guy. That is what makes him evil.

I have so many more examples but they're all from coming years so I can't talk about them.

Harry is never going to act like a cartoon villain, unless he's acting, and kill everyone who stands in his way. Even rumors of wrongdoings will hurt Harry's chances of reaching his goals. Harry is Grima Wormtongue wearing the image of a paladin, if that makes sense. And in dnd terms he is NE, with chaotic tendencies.

Next chapter: Bring a poncho because BS is going to be flying every direction. It will probably be the last chapter before I start book 2. Speaking of book 2 do you think I should publish a new story for it or keep it going in this one?

AN: When I write someone saying "Gnicc" or any variation of capitalization without punctuation it is pronounced nick. Whenever "G.N.I.C.C" is said again with any variation of capitalization it is pronounced as letters. I think this is common sense but I'm just making sure, this distinction is going to be crucial to Harry's story.

HPCOC

Harry woke late at night or early in the morning, there were no lights on and Harry didn't bother with a tempus charm because he could already feel sleep beckoning him back. He rolled over to get more comfortable and noticed the crinkle of parchment in his hand. A quick glance told him that Madam Pomfrey's light was still out, so he let a little of his glow out, just enough to read by. He smiled when he read the parchment. There were only five words.

Gens Necne Incorruptus Capio Caries

"The people or not of purity attacks evil?" Harry said as he translated. "Well I guess it could make less sense. Good enough for me. Thank you elves." Harry vanished the parchment and settled in to sleep again.

HPCOC

"Did you hear? They found Professor Quirrell's body." Asked a voice in the Great Hall.

"Poor man and after so long in the hospital, what happened?" Said a second student.

"Rumor has it that he was assassinated by some elite military person." The first said back conspiratorially.

"Well I heard that he was killed while stopping a death eater from entering the castle, after all someone had to set that basilisk loose." Said a third proudly.

"I heard that Harry Potter killed him, just before he killed the basilisk." A fourth said.

"That's absurd. Professor McGonagall saw the basilisk and she said it was twenty-five meters long at least. There is no way a first year could have hurt it, much less a first year that has been in the hospital for over a month." Percy said from the Gryffindor table.

"But I saw him running through the castle with a sword!" A Hufflepuff shouted back.

"My cousin's boyfriend lives in Hogsmeade and she told me that he told her that he watched Harry kill it!" A Gryffindor called from down the table.

"Enough!" Dumbledore yelled from the staff table. "Mr. Potter is the one who killed the basilisk and his friend killed Professor Quirrell. We don't have the whole story yet as Mr. Potter fell back unconscious, too much activity after too long of a rest I suspect, and Mr. Potter's friend is unavailable at the moment. However at this time it appears that Professor Quirrell freed the basilisk and was attempting to steal a priceless artifact."

The student body, missing nine specific members, sat in stunned silence for a few moments before quiet conversations erupted all over the hall as students were updating the rumors to incorporate the new information. Minerva McGonagall just sighed and leaned over to the Headmaster. "Albus, after all this time why do you still think announcements like that work?"

"Hope mostly." Albus said shaking his head sadly. "Hopefully I haven't made things worse for Harry."

"Professor?" One student called from the crowd. "Is Harry dying?"

Albus' eyes grew wide in the moment of absolute silence that followed the question. "What? No! Dear Merlin no. He's just sleeping. Madam Pomfrey said he could probably rejoin us by dinner, which knowing Potters means he'll be up by lunch."

A few minutes later a flock of owls came in, bringing copies of various publications and fueling even more chatter at the tables. Little did anyone in the hall know that on the other side of the castle the boy they were discussing was waking up surrounded by eight friends.

HPCOC

"So he just suddenly woke up and knew what he had to do?" Fred asked.

"Yea, it wasn't immediate though, first he wanted to know where Quirrell was." Tonks said.

"Madam Pomfrey didn't check until after he ran out but the Quirrell in the bed at the time was an illusion." Hermione said.

"How did he know?" Hannah asked.

"I didn't." Harry said yawning.

"HARRY!" Eight voices exclaimed as two bodies jumped onto the boy on the bed.

"OOMF!" Harry said as the air got crushed out of him. "Tonks, Hermione, not that I'm complaining but it feels like this just happened yesterday or something."

"Prat." Tonks giggled swatting him lightly.

"Harry, don't you ever do something like that again!" Hermione scolded.

"Yes dear." Harry said smiling, causing Hermione to turn scarlet.

Tonks and Hermione climbed off of Harry and let him move into a sitting position. Tonks immediately sat down next to him and made him scoot over, thereby removing any room for Hermione to join them. Tonks shot Hermione a quick victory glance. "So Harry, tell us everything."

"Everything? There is a lot of everything. I don't think we have the time for that." Harry said pensively. "But I can tell you about everything that happened since the last DADA class I attended."

Hermione moved her chair over to Harry's open side and gently laid a hand on his arm. "Well tell us that then."

"FRED! GEORGE!" Lee Jordan yelled as he ran into the ward. "And everyone else...HARRY! You're awake!"

"What is it Lee?" George asked. "We were just getting to story time."

"Ooo I want to hear the story too." Lee said before brandishing the roll of paper he was holding. "Morning post came in, I brought The Prophet, The Quibbler and Teen Witch Weekly."

"Wow, the vultures descended in my absence." Harry said taking the papers and started flipping through.

"What about story time!" Fred whined.

"Yea story time." George added.

"The sooner you tell us the sooner we can let other people know you're awake." Lee insisted.

"Jordan, why don't you go let people know now and come back with Dumbledore?" Daphne asked.

"Right, that way Harry will only need to tell the story once." Blaise agreed while the rest of the girls nodded. Lee nodded once and ran back out of the hospital.

"Mr. Potter. I see you're awake." Madam Pomfrey said emerging from her office to yell at the source of commotion, saddened slightly to see said source already running away. "How do you feel?"

"Perfectly fine for being exhausted." Harry said smiling. "Bit sore but I walk that out."

"You'll be doing no walking until I tell you to. You shouldn't have been doing any running or fighting either!" Pomfrey admonished, doing her check up scans while Harry's court rifled through the tabloids.

"What Hospital Gowns Reveal: The Secrets of Harry Potter's Bum." Susan read laughing brandishing a copy of TWW. "This has got to be good. Oh, look! Someone managed to take pictures!"

"Really?" Hannah asked as she and Daphne moved around to read over Susan's shoulder. "Is that a birthmark?"

"I think so." Daphne said squinting. "Looks kind of like a hippogriff to me."

"It does not look like a hippogriff!" Harry said angrily despite blushing bright red, before summoning the magazine. "If you don't mind can we not discuss my anatomy? Technically it isn't even a birthmark, just something I always forget to get rid of when I morph."

"How can you forget to morph a hippogriff shaped birthmark?" Fred asked. "That's something I would always be aware of."

"I don't spend a lot of time thinking about how I want my bum to look, so it just goes to default." Harry said sheepishly not noticing the TWW slip off his lap. "And it doesn't look like a hippogriff."

"I can see it." Hermione said head bent over the magazine. "See there are the wings and there's the horse body." She was holding the picture up in front of Harry pointing before she realized what she just admitted to studying and blushed again.

"E tu, Hermione?" Harry asked. "Poppy you gotta help me out here."

"Well Harry, it would seem that a lot of people will be doing more thinking about your bum than would before, maybe you should be one of them and prevent this from happening again." Pomfrey said. "Now calm down, your heart rate is varying and throwing off my scans." Harry groaned and flopped back while everyone laughed. Harry didn't even bother protesting when Tonks took the magazine from Hermione to do her own inspection.

"Aren't I too young for this kind of attention anyway?" Harry asked. "Who are these creeps who read this stuff?"

"It's Teen Witch Weekly." Susan said levelly. "Teen witches read it, and preteen witches for that matter, I got my first subscription from my mom as my ninth birthday present."

"About the same for me too." Daphne said. "Just think of how many first readers are reading this issue, your bum has probably secured their audience in every girl within four years of us."

"Can I sue them or something?" Harry grumbled.

"I don't think so." Blaise said. "You were photographed in a public place, you have no rights to the image."

"Well that's just great!" Harry sneered. "So what am I supposed to do?"

"Smile and wear tight pants!" Tonks suggested making everyone laugh and successfully breaking the mood.

The door flew open again and Lee practically toppled in after it. He dragged himself up, wheezing, with the help of a bed. After a few moments he caught enough air to talk. "Dumbledore...on his way...few steps behind...water?"

"Just running back and forth across the castle got you this winded?" Madam Pomfrey asked as she brought over a glass of water for him. "You're too young to be this out of shape, you should exercise more."

"Less about...being out...of shape...more about...what I...was shouting...on the way." Lee gasped out between breaths and long drinks of water. "Everyone knows...Harry's up!"

"I think most of Scotland knows, Mr. Jordan." McGonagall said curtly as she walked into the room along with Flitwick, Dumbledore and Shacklebolt. "Harry, this is Auror Shacklebolt, he's on lend from the Ministry as our replacement Defense Professor. He will be acting in his role as an Auror during this interview though."

"Understood." Harry offered his hand to Shacklebolt. "It's nice to meet you Auror Shacklebolt."

"Likewise Mr. Potter." Shacklebolt shook Harry's hand. "If you would start from the beginning we should be able to get through this quickly."

"Sounds good. The beginning I believe is the last class I attended." Harry said settling back and closing his eyes prompting Tonks to curl up against his side which in turn caused the Professors to share resigned looks and silently decide that it wasn't worth the effort to

say anything about the situation. "Class was starting and I had settled into my usual death glare while Quirrell called attendance..."

"Death glare?" Shacklebolt asked looking up from his notes.

"I wasn't trying to kill him with it or anything, something about him bugged me from day one." Harry shrugged. "Shortly after the year started I wanted him to be out of my life completely."

"You said something was bugging you. Can you elaborate?" Albus prompted.

"Er, not really, whenever he was near me though my scar would ache." Harry said.

"Interesting." Shacklebolt said. "Please continue."

"Alright, uh, after attendance he was talking about the day's work and then he caught my eye and smirked." Harry said. "Then I felt pressure on my occlumency shields and then pain."

"You know occlumency?" Shacklebolt stopped writing, shocked.
"Who taught you?"

"Yea, and Nick did...why?" Harry asked suspiciously.

"Oh, um, never mind." Shacklebolt said seemingly embarrassed.
"Just curious. What happened next?"

"Then I blacked out while I fought Voldemort off in my mind." Harry said plainly.

"WHAT!" Several voices cried, including the two closest to his ears.

"Well, over the month long battle I discovered that Voldemort possessed Quirrell and was trying to possess me that day." Harry said turning to Dumbledore. "I told you last night didn't I?"

"I think it was the answer you fell asleep while giving." Dumbledore said calmly. "You said enough before hand to infer the truth though."

"Anyway, I fought him to a draw, living inside someone else after ten years of barely existing must be hard on the mental discipline, and

eventually woke up." Harry informed them. "That's when a message spell hit me from Nick, he was just letting me know that he took care of Voldemort and he sent me after the basilisk."

"Who is Nick?" Shacklebolt asked. "And how did he deal with You-Know-Who?"

"Nick is the one who is responsible for everything I know." Harry said doing his best to look like he was overcome with loyalty. "As for what he did, you'll have to ask him."

"I plan on it. Please go on."

"From that point I jumped out of bed and ran up to the Headmaster's office and retrieved Godric's Sword." Harry said. "Then I went and killed the snake and came back here."

"You mean the Sword of Gryffindor?" Albus said surprised.

"Well, yes, that's the only sword that was in your office." Harry said.

"But that sword has been lost for centuries." Albus insisted.

"No it hasn't been, The Sorting Hat was holding on to it." Harry said watching the jaws drop on all the professors. "What didn't you know?"

"Obviously not." Tonks whispered in his ear.

"Where is the sword now?" McGonagall asked getting over her shock.

"I sent it with the elves for storage." Harry said innocently.

"You need to return it as soon as you can." McGonagall was pulling all of her air of authority. "It belongs here."

"Actually according to the hat it was left there for someone truly deserving to claim it." Harry replied cheekily. "Something about a true Gryffindor, but I'm pretty sure it belongs to me now."

"But you're not one of my lions." McGonagall protested. "How can you be a true Gryffindor?"

"I'm a true Slytherin and a true Ravenclaw too if that changes anything." Harry said smirking. "Although I'm only assuming I'm a true Ravenclaw too since that hat put me there in preference to the other two."

"And how did you get into my office?" Albus finally asked.

"Your gargoyle isn't really an obstacle for me." Harry shrugged. "It knows I can destroy it on a whim, and it is conscious enough to decide whether or not to stand in my way."

"Mmhmm. It isn't like any of us will forget the last time it 'suffered your wrath'." Hermione said, slightly mockingly, air quotes and all.

"This is interesting and all but after you got the sword you said you went to the village." Shacklebolt paused and Harry nodded. "Why didn't you wait for the professors?"

"Nick said go so I went." Harry casually said. "Besides they were probably doing something silly like catching a rooster or something."

"How is catching a rooster silly?" Shacklebolt asked. "They're deadly to basilisks."

"No they aren't, that is just a myth." Harry assured him.

"Are you sure?" Hermione asked. "Every book I looked through since last night has suggested roosters."

"Yup, it's a myth perpetuated by basilisk breeders in the early thirteenth century." Harry said. "The theory was that if an enemy was caught unprepared the basilisk would have an easy time killing them, and if they thought a rooster was the solution they would get that and think they were prepared thus granting the basilisks an easy victory."

"Really?" Hermione asked hoping that her books weren't wrong.

"Really." Harry said as her face fell. "Sorry."

"Alright so you ran into the village, giant monster easy enough to find so I won't bother asking." Shacklebolt admitted. "So next up is: Tell us about the fight itself."

"Well, it wasn't very long. I kept my eyes on the ground so it wouldn't kill me with its gaze. After it refused to surrender to me I had to get aggressive. That's when it tried to bite me so I filled its mouth with a giant cork, its jaw might unhinge but the muscles isn't designed to pull their fangs out of something like that. After that it was just an issue of timing before I was able to sever its spine, killing it."

"Did Nick teach you to sword fight too?" Shacklebolt asked.

"No...?" Harry tried to sound confused. "I've only had one lesson and that was 'hit them with the sharp bits'."

"That's not a bad first lesson." Shacklebolt laughed along with the rest. "So you got lucky and used skills that Nick taught you then..."

"Then G.N.I.C.C.L.D showed up and took the body to be processed." Harry said. "And I came back here."

"G.N.I.C.C.L.D?" Shacklebolt repeated. "What does that stand for?"

"Gens Necne Incorruptus Capio Caries, Logistics Division." Harry replied in a flat monotone that implied he was forced to memorize the name.

"And they are?" Shacklebolt said leadingly.

"The house elves that serve G.N.I.C.C" Harry said. "Obviously."

"What can you tell us about G.N.I.C.C?" Shacklebolt asked impatiently.

"Well the first time that I heard that basic question asked the answer was: 'G.N.I.C.C is like The Order of the Phoenix, except useful. You don't have the clearance to learn anything passed that yet.'" Harry quietly took glee in Dumbledore's expression of indignation. "I don't know who The Order of the Phoenix is, but they might have less strict policies so maybe you should see what they're doing, then just picture it better in every way."

Professor Flitwick was the only adult in the room who wasn't a member of the order, although he knew about it and was chuckling accordingly. Dumbledore, McGonagall, Shacklebolt and Madam Pomfrey were all looking suitably abashed. Then Dumbledore spoke up. "Harry, The Order of the Phoenix is a group I started to fight Voldemort in the last war."

"Oh, huh." Harry remarked and pretended like he was suddenly having an epiphany. "Well I guess that explains why Nick didn't have me go get your help with the basilisk."

Harry was laughing along with most of his court, Hermione was holding back as was Blaise, and even Flitwick was laughing out loud now. Madam Pomfrey looked amused, which surprised Harry some what. McGonagall and Shacklebolt were clearly angry and not used to getting made fun of. Dumbledore however looked like he had been personally insulted, which he had been of course.

"I think I have enough." Shacklebolt said cutting his syllables off sharply. "Goodbye Mr. Potter."

"Did I say something?" Harry called to Shacklebolt's back as he left.

"I would imagine that he doesn't like being made fun of anymore than I do." Dumbledore said disappointedly.

"How was I making fun of him?" Harry chewed on his lip. "All I did was make fun of the order, unless...oh. Anyone else who I should know is in the order so I don't bad mouth you guys in front of them?" Harry asked sounding concerned.

"That would be me." McGonagall said letting her Scottish accent come through strongly.

"Oh...heh." Harry smiled at her timidly, cackling evilly inside. "Sorry?"

"Your parents were members Harry." Dumbledore said channeling the grandfather routine again. "We're the ones who helped them go into hiding."

"I bet you helped the Longbottoms too." Harry waited for the nod.
"Look how that turned out for all of them. I wouldn't really brag about being their protectors if I were you."

McGonagall huffed indignantly "Why you...the nerve...If your mother could hear you...URG!" She threw her hands in the air exasperatedly and stalked away from the bed, without leaving the ward.

"Mr. Potter. I expect a meeting with Nick to discuss what happened with Quirrell. You tell him to contact me and make sure to tell him that I expect civility towards any order members I choose to have present." Dumbledore said imperially.

"I'll let him know sir." Harry said diplomatically. "I can't make any promises about his attendance or etiquette though."

"Understandable, I'll leave you to your recovery." Albus said seriously while starting towards the door. "If you'll excuse me I have to go see a hat about a sword." McGonagall sent one last angry glare back in Harry's direction before following the Headmaster out.

"Well that went well." Harry said cheerily in the silence that followed.

"So what now?" Susan asked.

"Now we do something about the press." Harry said.

"Didn't we establish that there was nothing you could do about the bum thing?" George asked.

"That's true, but this is about the rest of the press." Harry smiled.
"Daphne, I'm appointing you to be temporarily my press secretary. Mainly because I think you will have more of an idea of how to call a press conference tomorrow than I do."

"I'll owl my mum! She'll know how to do this." Daphne sounded proud as she pulled out a sheet of parchment from her bag and started writing.

"What will the rest of us do?" Hannah asked.

"Simple, we each take an article and start picking it apart to try and figure out what questions I'll be expecting to receive tomorrow."

Harry said.

"Dibs on the bum one!" Tonks shouted making the other girls groan sadly.

AN: What do I have to say today? First of all I have decided that this story will have years 1-3 the second will have 4 and 5 and the third will have 6 and 7.

Summer after second year I have planned for him to make a second wand and I have a strong idea of how I want it to go, but if you readers have ideas for wand components that you haven't seen before let me know, if your ideas are better than mine I might use them. Same for large dementor's bones, I have uses for all the little ones already, and only one or two for the biggies.

Also, I don't really see this fic as coming out without having the trio in a relationship together so I'm just going to call it now. HP/NT/HG.

Next chapter: Harry talks to the press, Nick upsets Dumbledore and foreshadowing for next year(probably, I might wait one more on this depending on flow.)

AN: If you've ever wondered what happens when two manipulative bastards/chess masters get into equivalent of a bout of bare knuckle boxing, this chapter should make you happy. It is pretty brutal and not even slightly subtle.

HPCOC

"Alright, I am definitely not answering any questions from TWW." Harry said when Tonks finished her report. "What do we expect from The Quibbler?"

"Uh..." Fred said from next to George both of whom were looking at the magazine in their hands while Blaise and Hermione stood behind them all four with confused expressions. "Probably something about a made up animal called a snorkack and something about cooking. We don't know why."

"Cooking?" Harry asked unbelieving. "Really? What makes you think that?"

"There is this one...paragraph?" George asked looking to Hermione, who shrugged. "Erm, here goes: 'I wonder if Mr. Potter's experiments with thyme, the herb, have revealed any prospective means to attract the elusive crumple-horned snorkack.' When have you been experimenting with food?"

"This article wasn't written by Luna was it?" Harry sighed.

"Yea it is." Hermione said shortly. "Do you know her?"

"In the same fashion that I knew you August thirty-first." Harry said quietly. "She'll be here next year."

"Wait!" Hermione exclaimed. "She hasn't even started school yet and she's a reporter?"

"Yea, her dad owns the paper, and is rather eccentric." Harry shrugged. "They're generally good people though."

"Well, she also makes a lot of connections between you and Stubby Boardman." Blaise said. "But he's been dead since just after the war."

"Oh, him." Harry shook his head. "The Lovegoods are of the belief that Stubby Boardman was a pseudonym for Sirius Black and that when my godfather went to Azkaban and Stubby died, well they took it as proof."

"By eccentric you meant insane right?" Fred raised an eyebrow.

"We're all insane sir, they're just insane in a special way." Harry said sagely. "Don't worry though, I'm sure I can deal with anything that Luna asks...I hope. Is anyone else hungry?"

Harry hopped out of bed after getting nods of confirmation from the group and transfigured his hospital gown into plain black robes. "I wish I'd thought of this yesterday." He grumbled.

Laughing the group made their way out of the Hospital Wing. Interestingly Madam Pomfrey didn't protest at all. Harry checked the clock on the way out and noticed that it was already halfway through lunch, and he'd been anticipating catching the end of breakfast. Oh well. He thought. These things happen.

His disappointment was completely compensated by the scene that they found in the Great Hall. Dumbledore, all of the professors and several older students were standing around a giant pile of crates. Snape was waiving a piece of parchment at Dumbledore. "Albus, it would take myself and twenty skilled assistants at least a week to do this. Face it, G.N.I.C.C is bigger than we can imagine."

"How many do you think it would take Severus?" Dumbledore asked, his guess was somewhere around eighty but he was by no means a potions expert.

"At least a hundred. Maybe as many as a hundred and fifty." Snape drawled. "And ready to work at a moment's notice."

The professors started debating about how many members an organization would have to have in order to mobilize that kind of man power. Harry stopped listening, after all, no matter what they decided, they'd be wrong, and quietly made his way to the Ravenclaw table. His friends took up the positions they had that day with the flying incident. Harry noticed the silence and looked around to see almost the entire student body staring at him.

"Hey guys!" Harry said jovially before raising his hand and waiving it around emphatically. "So...Raise your hand if you thought I was dying!"

People laughed and Harry turned back towards the food. A few people raised their hands but lowered them quickly, blushing, when they realized that Harry was being rhetorical. This was enough to break the tension though and soon the students were back to their own conversations and not staring at Harry.

Harry felt awkward under all of the attention. He found this very strange too considering how much attention he had been trying to draw to himself. Perhaps that was the problem, he hadn't drawn this to himself. Then again, perhaps it was a carry over from his last life shining through. Harry's reflection didn't last long.

"Mr. Potter." McGonagall said as she walked towards them holding the parchment that Snape had been brandishing. "May I ask for your reasoning behind placing me in charge of...all of this?" She waived the parchment at him.

"Officially it is because as the Deputy Headmistress it is your job to take the duties that Professor Dumbledore is too busy for." Harry said smiling.

"And unofficially?" She sounded suspicious.

"Because I wanted to add stress to your plate right before final exams." There was a sharp intake of breath from the students who were listening, complimented by a symphony of flatware dropping from limp hands. "Kidding of course. I thought that you would delegate the responsibilities to a village representative whereas Dumbledore would insist on dictating how the money is spent. The money isn't to better the image of Albus Dumbledore."

"While I don't agree, I will accept your reasoning." McGonagall replied curtly and walked back to the staff table shaking her head.

"What is all of that?" Hermione asked.

"Basilisk bits." Harry said. "G.N.I.C.C was working on it all night."

"Harry! Do you realize how much that basilisk was worth?" George almost shouted.

"And you gave it all away?" Fred finished shocked.

"Well, not all of it." Harry smirked. "I kept about ten percent of the value and the skull."

"The skull?" Hermione asked eyebrow raised. "Trophy?"

"Yea, something like that." Harry shrugged. "I think I am going to end up putting it in whatever room I use to have meetings with people in places of power. We're going to be experimenting with parts of the skeleton to see how it does with channeling magic, I might end up making the skull the base of a ward scheme at some point instead, haven't had much time to think about it."

"You could always do both." Tonks suggested brightly.

"I bet Professor Snape is going to be upset that he doesn't get to skim off the top." Blaise weighed in.

"What's he going to do about it? Give Harry a hard time?" Hannah asked. "He does that already."

"That is another reason I bypassed Dumbledore." Harry said. "I'm sure he would have given Snape whatever he wanted."

"Speaking of Dumbledore you should really tell him about the press event tomorrow." Daphne said quietly.

Harry looked up to where the teachers were bickering again. "I'll finish lunch first I think."

HPCOC

"Professors Dumbledore and Flitwick." Harry started as he walked up to the now settled down staff table. "I'm entertaining a few members of the press for tea tomorrow at 2:30."

"Mr. Potter, I've already spoken to the press for you." Dumbledore said smiling genially.

"And who gave you that right?" Harry demanded. "It sure wasn't me."

"I was acting en loco parentis, but I'm sure your Aunt and Uncle would have given their consent." Dumbledore rebuffed.

"You only have those right while a student has no magical guardian." Harry said. "Since Sirius was released I have had a magical guardian."

"Lord Black isn't going to be legally your guardian until the Wizengamot has declared him fit." Dumbledore said gently. "He spent a long time in Azkaban. It would be irresponsible of us to allow him complete freedom before making sure he is ready for it."

"What!" Harry demanded. "Why wasn't I told?"

"I advised Lord Black against telling you because it was our hope that everything would be resolved before summer started so you could go with him and never need to know." Dumbledore said levelly. "I wouldn't have told you if it didn't come up. No sense in worrying about something you cannot effect and might not matter in the long run."

"Did you just say I might not get to live with him this summer?" Harry asked impatiently.

"Yes, the chance is small though." Dumbledore smiled reassuringly. "There is still about a month before the end of term."

"You're the Chief Warlock!" Harry exclaimed. "Push it through faster old man!"

"You're upset so I'm going to ignore the lack of respect, I'm also not going to get into the difficulties of your request. I will say that I'm doing what I can." Dumbledore said before silently adding ...to keep you at the Dursleys.

"And if it doesn't get resolved by summer?" Harry asked irritably, already knowing the answer.

"I'm afraid you're only option at that point is to go to the Dursleys for one last summer." Unless I can get him permanently declared unfit. Dumbledore thought.

"That's not happening." Harry said stubbornly, crossing his arms.

"I certainly hope not." Albus agreed. "But the press is definitely not happening."

"What? Why? You can't do that." Harry pleaded.

"I am the headmaster of this school, I am certainly within my rights to deny the press access to the grounds." Dumbledore declared. "And I think the students have been disrupted more than enough by this incident, we don't need journalists traipsing all over the place."

"They'll be coming into the Entrance Hall, having tea, asking questions and leaving. There will be no traipsing." Harry insisted.

"Unless one of them 'has to go to the restroom'" Dumbledore supplied air quotes. "and uses it as an excuse to run down students and get quotes."

"You're paranoid."* Harry said.

"Perhaps, but it is my job to be and I'm not wavering on this." Dumbledore said with finality.

"Fine!" Harry shouted and stomped off. In this moment most of Hogwart's witnessed a rare event for Snape was taking open glee in seeing the spawn of his rival rebuffed so completely.

"Bad news?" Hermione asked as Harry sat down next to her again.

"Very." Harry said angrily. "He's denying the press access to the grounds and then told me that I might not get to live with my godfather this summer."

"What?" Tonks asked. "Why would he deny the press?"

"And why wouldn't you be able to live with Sirius?" Fred added.

"I think he is punishing me for snubbing him with the basilisk parts and for what I said about his order." Harry grumbled.

"What about Sirius, surely he doesn't have the authority to take you away from him." Hermione stated.

"No, Dumbledore doesn't have that power, but the Wizengamot does." Harry admitted. "They have him tied up in red tape to see if he is fit to be my guardian, before he is allowed to be my guardian. Conveniently Dumbledore is the head of the Wizengamot."

"That's not fair!" Hannah exclaimed.

"It really is." Harry assured her, Blaise, Daphne and, surprisingly, Susan all nodded with his statement.

"Harry has been using the same tactics all year." Blaise said.

"With his own additions." Susan added nodding.

"At some point Dumbledore was going to play his game." Daphne said.

"Students don't normally politic against adults." Blaise continued levelly. "We don't have any positions of power yet. Once we grow up we'll be heads of houses, or ministry officials or something. It doesn't really matter because then we will have some sort of influence on things."

"Harry has influence early on because of his fame." Susan said.
"Which gave him the weight to start with."

"But he can only influence opinion at the moment." Daphne finished.

"Which puts me distinctly at a disadvantage against policy makers." Harry concluded solemnly. "Especially since I don't have full access to the Potter wealth for bribe money."

"Bribe money?" Hermione asked incredulously "Isn't bribery illegal?"

"Don't forget that the magical world has different laws than the muggle one." Tonks said. "But in general yes, the penalties are minimal though."

"And everyone is okay with that?" Hermione asked skeptically.

"Our government is run by an appointed executive branch with an elected head and a hereditary one combined legislative and judicial branch, which is the body that elects the minister." Harry said.
"Anyone who cares is not in a position to do anything about it."

"So what about what the citizens want?" Hermione asked curiously.

"Our community is small, public opinion is easy to hear." Daphne said.

"And with people like Harry and Dumbledore around you can't really trust the public opinion." Blaise said smiling.

"Hey!" Harry objected. "I resent that."

"Resent it all you want, it's true." Blaise rebutted. "I've been watching you all year, it does beg the question; why aren't you in Slytherin?"

"People don't trust sneaky snakes." Harry said quietly enough for only the eight of them to hear. "Sneaky eagles take you by surprise."

"So the hat just put you in Ravenclaw?" Susan asked just as quietly.

"Well I had to ask." Harry whispered.

"I didn't know you could make requests!" Hermione whisper-shrieked.

"Yea, I asked to go where Harry did." Tonks whispered, shrugging.

"You did?" Harry asked, touched.

"Yea, it wanted to put me in Hufflepuff." Tonks said smiling. "It said that my determination to be sorted with the other metamorph was a great show of loyalty, but my ability to argue the problems with that won the day."

Harry and Tonks just looked at each other smiling for a few seconds before Daphne broke the awkward, for the other seven anyway, moment. "So I guess I should go write letters telling the reporters not to come, shouldn't I?"

"Huh?" Harry started shaking his head. "Oh, yea."

"Alright, they're sure to be upset with this." Daphne said starting to get up.

"Wait!" Harry stopped her. "Tell them that we're doing it at The Three Broomsticks."

"But Harry," Hermione started with a tone that Harry knew all too well from his last life. "We're not allowed to leave the grounds."

"True, I actually have a plan that can get me out of trouble, Tonks too but I can't pull it off for anyone else." Harry said thoughtfully. "Although I wouldn't suggest you attend, there is little reason for you to be there and it could use up all of your leverage to get away with it."

"But you can't go alone." Tonks insisted.

"I won't be alone either way. Nick will be there." Harry smiled reassuringly.

"What's the leverage to get us out of trouble?" Tonks asked. "If I'm comparing the values of my options I should know the value of my options."

"Too true." Harry commended and leaned across Hermione to whisper to her directly. "Dumbledore gave us waivers to get out of detentions. So long as he doesn't remember he will probably only assign one detention per person. I would tell everyone but we really don't want Dumbledore to find out until tomorrow."

Tonks nodded her agreement. "You're right, I am better off saving that."

"Alright so I'm telling the press tea with Harry and Nick 2:30 at the Three Broomsticks." Daphne recapped standing up. "I'm off."

"I have a few letters to write myself." Harry said standing as well. "Gotta find out who I need to talk to to get a visit with Sirius. Sirius will probably know."

When Harry left the remaining members of his court broke up and went their ways, except for Hermione and Tonks, who went with Harry, and went to their dorms to be interrogated by the other students.

The reply from Sirius came quickly and they were scheduled to meet after dinner the next day.

HPCOC

That evening Nick intercepted Dumbledore just as he was entering the Great Hall for dinner. No one noticed as Harry discretely checked the time. "Ah, Headmaster. Harry told me that you were looking to have a word with me. I'm fairly busy but I have time now if it is convenient." Nick said in his thick London accent.**

"Have you eaten? I was just on my way to dinner and you would be more than welcome to join me Mr. ... Harry never gave us your surname." Dumbledore said apologetically.

"Nick is a more than adequate title." Nick said calmly. "And to answer your question, yes I have eaten, I had dinner just before coming here, in fact. If you like we can reschedule."

"No, that won't be necessary, I'll just eat later." Dumbledore said leading Nick out of the hall. "Let's go to my office and chat."

"If you're sure." Nick said diplomatically. "I don't want to impose."

"It is no imposition, I assure you." Dumbledore insisted. "It isn't as though the food will all be gone when we're done."

"Are you sure?" Nick joked. "Harry has told me things about that Weasley boy."

Dumbledore laughed. "I suspect that boy is why his family has such a difficult time saving money."

"Lemon drop?" Dumbledore offered a few minutes later when they got to his office. Nick politely declined. Dumbledore tented his hand in front of his mouth for a few moments. "So, what can you tell me about Harry's training?"

"Not a lot." Nick said. "The specifics are classified but it is fairly comprehensive, this summer he's scheduled to start combat training."

"Do you think it is wise to push him at this age?" Dumbledore asked concerned. "Would it not be better for him to have a normal childhood?"

"The kid was more famous by his second birthday than you will ever be Albus. His life would never have been normal." Nick said. "Besides the order came from the top. Our founder himself wanted to make sure that Harry was ready for whatever he will have to face in his life."

"What do you think he will have to face?" Dumbledore asked.

"Our founder knows something about Harry that he hasn't told another living soul." Nick shrugged. "I suppose what he isn't telling us holds that answer."

"Any theories?" Dumbledore pressed.

"Well, the only thing we know is that it isn't a prophecy that he's withholding." Nick said grimacing.

"Why do you think that?" Dumbledore asked slightly concerned.

"Well if there was a prophecy indicating that Harry should have or would need to have advanced training to survive wouldn't be kept hidden from him." Nick said confidently. "The Grand Nick might be crotchety in his age but he isn't that much a of a jerk."

Albus gulped audibly. "Grand Nick?"

"That is the title of our founder." Nick said.

"His name is Nick as well?" Dumbledore inquired.

"When the vest is on your name is always Nick, or Nicole, if you're a girl." Nick said proudly. "Helps keep us anonymous."

"Interesting idea." Dumbledore admitted. "I suppose if you're stubborn enough that would be successful."

"And we're definitely stubborn enough." Nick replied. "So let's cut the crap, why did you call me here?"

"My first goal is to hear the details of what happened between you and Professor Quirrell yesterday." Dumbledore sat back in his chair folding his hands patiently.

"There isn't much to tell." Nick said. "When I saw him holding the stone I hit his hand with a reducto and then we bantered, why do the bad guys always talk? Then we fought and I killed him, I vanished his head too. Never can be too safe."

"How did you get passed my protections?" Dumbledore asked.

"Oh, please. I could have gotten through that mess as a first year." Nick boasted. "I don't know how you expected them to keep out anyone decently talented with a wand. Besides Voldemort destroyed everything on his way through."

"So tell me more about your organization." Dumbledore ordered.

"No." Nick responded.

"If you don't I'm going to have to insist that you don't come into contact with Harry again." Dumbledore tried.

"Insist all you want. I don't care." Nick retaliated. "No one cares what you say Harry can or can't do."

"I'm his guardian and I will be respected." Dumbledore said irritated. "Harry is not to go near you."

"Good for you making rules and everything." Nick said condescendingly. "Best of luck trying to enforce them though. It's not like we ever needed your permission before."

"I'll have you arrested." Dumbledore countered.

"Who are you going to charge with the crimes?" Nick asked raising an eyebrow. "Nick is a title, not a name. Not to mention that it is the

title from a group that you only know about because our founder decided to let you know. I'm leaving now. Maybe we can talk again when you're less hostile."

Dumbledore wasn't used to being dismissed out of hand like that. He was Albus Dumbledore, for the last fifty years he has gotten an answer to every question and obedience from everyone. How dare he say that Albus' rules didn't apply to Albus' charge. Albus knew his plan was ill advised but he was so upset that he stopped caring, and sent the strongest legilimency probe he could muster into the strange man. All he needed was blackmail to leverage against him, he was sure there would be something.

"Albus!" Minerva called out.

Strange, they all know not to barge into meetings. Albus thought, confused. Why are my eyes closed?

"Albus wake up!" Minerva called again, this time shaking his shoulder slightly.

Did I fall down? What's going on? Albus asked himself, opening his eyes. He was in his office with Minerva and no one else. There was someone here... "Ur...what are you doing in here? Can't you see I'm in a meeting."

"Albus, it has been hours since you left the Great Hall." Minerva said, relieved that he was speaking.

"What? No it hasn't." Dumbledore argued. "We've only been talking for a few minutes."

"Albus, it is dark out, all the students are in bed as are most of the staff." McGonagall said patiently. "I think you've been unconscious the whole time. What's the last thing you remember?"

"I was talking to Nick, he was refusing my answers." Dumbledore said listlessly. "Then I got angry and he started to leave, then I heard you."

"Do you think he attacked you?" McGonagall asked upset.

"Maybe, it's foggy, I can't really remember." Albus said as he started to get to his feet. He stumbled slightly and Minerva immediately caught him. "Thank you Minerva."

"You've had a long day, why don't we get you to bed and we can deal with Nick tomorrow." McGonagall said reassuringly and lead Albus into his bed chamber.

At least one person is still doing what I intend them to do. Albus thought smiling.

Across the castle there was only one thought left for Harry tonight before sleep claimed him. I wonder if the old man will think twice about brain raping people?

HPCOC

Harry's morning was eventful. Based on how often he had a staff member tailing him he assumed that Dumbledore had heard about the change in venue and order the teachers to do anything to keep Harry from going. Not that it was going to work.

Harry wasn't surprised that Filch and Snape were the two that were trying the hardest to catch him, what did surprise Harry though was McGonagall being the third most vigilant. She followed him around all morning with a strange cold glare. Snape and Filch both looked giddy at having the chance to get Harry in trouble.

McGonagall and Snape were both at the staff table while Filch loitered at the door to the entrance hall during lunch. Just before 1:30 Harry decided it was time to go. He stood up, and very loudly and clearly spoke to his court, loud enough for every person in the hall to hear. "I'm going to the bathroom now, I'll see you in a few hours."

Harry made a hasty exit passed Filch, who followed a few moments later. He activated the Marauder's Map while he was walking and watched as McGonagall and Snape spread out, presumably to prevent Harry from slipping by unnoticed. Harry smirked. Time to have some fun.

For the next fifty minutes Harry wandered around the halls messing with the heads of his pursuers. The professors never stood a chance

really. One moment Harry would duck around a corner in front of one and then walk out of a door in front of another. Between disillusioning himself, warping and the map it was a cake walk.

HPCOC

Just my luck. McGonagall thought to herself. Why couldn't Harry be like the twins, or any other trouble student and at least be troublesome where you know where he is. But no. Harry Potter has to be harder to get a hold on than a fish.

That is when she heard a scream coming from above her. She drew her wand and increased her pace up the stairs, she only got a few more steps when she saw Harry's body fall passed her. She jumped over to the rail intent on casting charms to save the boys life from the fall. She looked down and saw nothing. No falling boy, no smear on the floor, nothing, eventually she decided that she'd been pranked. Screw this search, I need a drink.

HPCOC

A disillusioned Harry was flying just under the stairs that lead from the third floor to the fourth trying his hardest not to start laughing. Once he had the impulse under control he warped off to the village to meet the press. Harry stayed disillusioned as he entered the bar and decided it was a good thing as Hagrid, Dumbledore and Professor Sprout were there waiting for him. Dumbledore is really desperate to win this battle for control. Harry thought as he carefully made his way passed them. I suppose it makes sense if he is still trying to get me to take the martyr's path. Gnicc training is certainly a threat to his plan.

Harry was starting up the stairs to the private room when a doe patronus materialized in the room. It spoke in Snape's voice. "Albus, we're pretty sure he's managed to get out of the castle."

"Who are you waiting for?" Madam Rosmerta called from behind the bar.

"Harry Potter. He is supposed to be hosting a press conference today but wasn't given permission to leave the grounds." Hagrid said loudly.

"What? He's been here for half an hour already." Rosmerta told them, causing Harry to quicken his pace. "They're in room four."

"WHAT?" Dumbledore shouted.

Harry slipped into room four and quickly warded it against everything he could think of. He dropped his disillusionment as he turned to face the reporters. "Hello everyone. Um, if anyone asks I've been here since two okay?"

Harry walked to join Nick at the head of the table. Rita Skeeter was there along with Luna and a woman in her twenties that Harry had never seen before. The older ladies each brought their own photographer. Nick was there too, obviously, and he was the one that checked in with Rosmerta a half an hour ago.

Harry sat down and calmly pour himself some tea. "Well I believe that you all know me, but I'm Harry Potter. The man on my right is Nick. He is a friend and ally." Harry said before motioning towards Rita.

"My name is Rita Skeeter, I write for the Prophet, you may have heard of me. This man is my photographer." Rita said waving dismissively at her companion. "Um, Frank, I think."

"My name is Steve Miller." Her photographer muttered. "How many times do I have to tell you?"

"I'm Joan Fellows from Teen Witch Weekly and my photographer-" The twenty something started.

"-Can introduce himself, thank you." The photographer smiled down at her, clearly not taking offense. As she chuckled he finished. "I'm Solomon Glover, it's nice to meet you."

"Luna Lovegood, Quibbler." Luna said. "Daddy said I'm too young to boss around a photographer, so I brought my own camera. His name is Stu."

"It is a shame that no one from International Wizarding News was able to make it." Nick said, both he and Harry smiling at Luna while the others looked insulted by her presence.

"So let's get started then." Harry said clapping his hands together while the reporters picked up their quills. "Luna?"

"Mr. Potter, will you tell us about your experiments with thyme?" Luna asked dreamily.

"Excuse me?" Harry asked internal warning signs flashing.

"I've heard that you're changing thyme." Luna said in a misty voice. "We were wondering if it was a culinary endeavor or a botanical one."

"Oh, um, well, I've been cooking a fair bit if that's what you mean." Harry said frowning and rubbing the back of his neck. "I mean, not in the last month or so, but before then. Rita?"

"Why the change of venue?" Rita asked raising an eyebrow.

"Headmaster Dumbledore was adamant that having the press present would disrupt the other students." Harry said calmly.

"And you were allowed to come without an escort?" Rita followed up.

"Oh, no, not at all. If you were to open the door right now you would find three staff members, I'm perfectly escorted." Harry smiled cheekily. "Joan?"

"Everyone wants to know, does Harry Potter have his eyes set on a specific girl?" Joan asked wagging her eyebrow suggestively, Solomon wasted no time taking a picture of Harry's blush.

"No comment." Harry said quickly. "Luna?"

"How did you and Nick meet?"

"I'll cover this one Harry." Nick said and stepped forward. "G.N.I.C.C leadership decided to take an interest in Harry's development. I made contact with Harry for the first time within hours of him being left at his muggle relatives' house by Albus Dumbledore."

"Rita?" Harry prompted.

"Nick, what was your involvement in the events of the other day?"

"I don't know what story Dumbledore officially released but after Harry got attacked by Quirrell and they got put in the hospital wing I took up a guardian role there." Nick said. "I have no doubt that I was with Harry for more of that time than anyone, including his girls." Joan gasped quietly and jotted down some extra notes.

"Then when Quirrell got out of bed all of a sudden I knew there was something wrong, so I followed him. He gave the basilisk the orders to attack the village and then made his way to the third floor corridor that had various protections within. Being an agent of Voldemort, Quirrell didn't care and simply obliterated everything in front of him. Our confrontation ended in the room with the artifact Quirrell was trying to steal and we fought until I was forced to kill him." Nick continued.

"That accomplished I found myself tired but I knew that Harry would be up momentarily so I sent him a message informing him of the basilisk." Nick concluded soundly.

"Where did the basilisk come from?" Luna asked. "And did you find any aquavirius maggots? They're supposed to like feasting on the cast off scales of semi-aquatic snakes."

"I believe it was the Chamber of Secrets, can't be sure though." Nick shrugged. "Quirrell spoke a password and the sink in a bathroom moved to the side and opened a long tunnel to a space deep under the school where the snake was. I'm afraid I don't know what an aquavirius maggot looks like. I can check with the elves to see if any were harvested."

"You can't miss them." Harry said nonchalantly "They're about this size of your finger, bright blue and they flash."

"Um...right." Nick said scratching his head, not noticing that Luna was beaming at Harry. "I didn't see any of those no, sorry."

"So what happened next?" Rita asked.

"That's my part of the story." Harry said. "I woke up in my bed when Quirrell died. Just after my moment of disorientation left me I greeted my friends and then heard the message."

"The mission was pretty straight forward, get weapon, kill snake." Harry shrugged. "The only basilisk slaying weapon whose location I knew was the Sword of Gryffindor. So I made my way up to Dumbledore's office and asked the Sorting Hat to fetch the sword for me. From there I made my way as quickly as I could down to the village, and you know the rest from there."

"How is it that you just happened to know the location of a priceless treasure that has been lost for centuries?" Rita dug.

"Has it really?" Harry asked looking to Nick, who shrugged. "I knew it was considered 'lost' which is what allowed me to claim it, but you really didn't know?"

"How were we supposed to know?" Rita said indignantly. "It hasn't been seen since Godric died and he didn't leave a record of it."

"Haven't you listened to the Hat's song?" Harry retorted. "It tells you flat out that Godric put the brains in it. Actually the hat is more similar to a magic portrait than anything else."

"You said it was in Dumbledore's office." Luna breathed. "I understand that there is a guardian gargoyle to prevent just that."

"A few months ago that gargoyle and I got into a disagreement." Harry said with emphasis on 'disagreement'. "I believe that since then it has adopted the policy of not trying to stop me."

"Oh, the blibbering humdingers claimed that they gave you the password." Luna said sounding disappointed.

"The blibbering humdingers are probably also the ones who told you I was cooking, despite me distinctly making them promise to keep it a secret." Harry sighed. "You can't trust anything they say."

Luna looked slightly upset with the answer but didn't say anything. Joan did pick up the questions though. "You said that there was a disagreement. Details?"

"It was the day of my godfather's trial and I didn't want to be late. The Headmaster was taking us and we were trying to get him to hurry up when we realized that none of us knew the password."

Harry explained, blushing. "When the gargoyle didn't move after we asked, I got angry and blew it up."

"Who is 'we'?" Rita followed up, Harry was beginning to think that they each only had a very loose guide for their questions and were really just fishing for everything they could.

"My best friends Hermione Granger and Tonks, and myself of course." Harry said looking Rita dead in the eye.

"Are those the 'his girls' that Nick spoke of?" Joan asked with a coy grin.

"No comment." Harry said blushing. "I am not going to talk about my love life, nor am I going to talk about anatomy. Just leave it alone."

"Come on Harry." Rita said saucily. "Countless girls across the country are eagerly waiting to find out if there is still a chance with you."

"No comment." Harry said blushing harder. To his irritation Nick started laughing, Harry felt like he had betrayed himself.

"We've gotten several letters from girls declaring that by the end of next year you would be theirs." Joan laughed. "Probably many more have the same goal and just haven't told anyone, right Luna?"

"Of course." Luna said without missing a beat and completely devoid of embarrassment. "My goal is Christmas though."

Harry buried his face in his hands while everyone else laughed for a while. When they were done Rita pulled them back onto topic. "So Harry, how are you going to spend the money from selling the body?"

"I actually took the lazy route. I donated ninety percent of the raw ingredients to the village for reconstruction and to assist the families that were effected." Harry smiled, knowing how good this was for his image. "The remaining portion I am holding for my own personal use. So in short, I'm not going to spend it because I made no gold from the event. What I am actually going to be using the parts for, I'm not sure yet."

And so the afternoon went, for two more hours the three reporters asked questions and Harry answered. Rita's continued to get more and more invasive as she searched for all the seeds of discord she could find. Joan's questions were about his social life and had a strong focus towards trying to make him slip up and talk about girls. Luna's questions continued getting more and more bizarre, spanning a great variety of subjects, both real and fictional, fortunately Harry's former memories continued to supply him with the answers she was looking for. Nick was questioned from time to time but never was asked anything of significance.

Finally Harry dropped the wards on the room and the press started filing out, right passed an upset Dumbledore. He didn't speak until all of the reporters were gone. "Detention, Mr. Potter, tomorrow night with Professor Snape, you'll report to his office at eight o'clock."

"Yes, sir." Harry said solemnly and followed Albus as he started making his way back up to the castle. Harry smirked when he noticed the beetle crawling up the back of the Headmaster's robes. He hoped Rita was going to get a good scoop.

HPCOC

Halfway across the island Lucius Malfoy was sitting at the desk in his study with an old black book resting in front of him. He picked up his quill and started writing.

Master,

The reports are confirmed, the boy killed the basilisk. How does this effect our plan?

This just means a change of target, I'll need someone able to operate below notice.

AN:

* I was really tempted to have him say 'You be trippin' foo!', I think what I ended up using is significantly weaker.

** I have no talent with accents of any kind, Fleur Krum Hagrid etc will all take some imagination on the readers part. I'm sorry about this and I wish I knew how to write accents without feeling awkward.

Further more I am an American and I don't even have any idea what specific regional accents sound like. Consider this footnote a blanket apology for any accent I attempt past, present or future.

Based on word processor pages this chapter is twice as long as average. I hope you liked it.

Next chapter might take me a little longer than normal to write, it depends on how much of the articles I want to include. It should be the end of this story arc though.

As Harry split off from Dumbledore to rejoin his friends Albus sighed and sent a patronus messenger. He was almost halfway to his office when Snape joined him. "Ah Severus, Mr. Potter will be joining you for detention tomorrow evening after dinner."

"I see." Severus drawled. "Is there any particular reason you chose to stick the brat on me?"

"I thought you might be able to enjoy yourself." Albus said smiling. "I don't think I'm going to remember to mark down an end time. Just don't break any rules. The boy needs to learn to obey me but if you give him a foot hold he'll crucify you."

"I think I have just the thing." Snape said smirking. "I assume that cleaning two classes worth of cauldrons is within the rules."

"Yes that should be no problem at all." Dumbledore replied, knowing how difficult some cauldrons can be to clean.

"So how much damage did he do?" Snape asked.

"I can't be sure until the articles are published. That room had some of the best privacy wards I've ever seen." Dumbledore admitted glumly. "I just hope he didn't tell Rita that I threatened to halt Black's guardianship."

Neither of them noticed a small green beetle drop off of Dumbledore's robes in shock.

HPCOC

"PADFOOT!" Harry shouted as he dashed across the Entrance Hall that evening.

"Hey Pup!" Sirius said hugging Harry.

"I woke up and got out of the hospital and stuff." Harry said gleefully. "Thought you should know."

"I see that." Sirius said laughing. "So tell me about the fight."

"Later." Harry said turning serious suddenly. "What can we do about the hold up with you gaining guardianship?"

"Not much." Sirius said. "Normally being a wealthy noble would be helping my case."

"But Dumbledore..." Harry lead.

"Hah. But Dumbledore has the wizengamot convinced that since I became Lord Black while incarcerated that I might not be able to handle the stress of it and a child. His fear is that I will be so busy with matters of state just buy you what ever you want instead of actually parenting you."

"Did you tell that that I have gone ten years without parenting already at the place I'll be going if they don't grant you guardianship?" Harry asked.

"Yes, but Dumbledore vouches for the Dursleys and so it is his word against mine." Sirius said sadly.

"I'll tell them then." Harry countered hotly.

"Then it is your word against his, which is closer but Dumbledore would probably still win." Sirius replied flatly. "I'm pretty sure Dumbledore got this started in the first place."

"I wouldn't be surprised, but tell me your reasoning." Harry asked rationally.

"When you were unconscious he approached me trying to convince me that it would be better for you to go back to the Dursleys. The next day I told him that it was going to be your choice and he made that disappointed face at me said he understood, and then two days later I get a notice of the inquiry." Sirius said grimacing. "I don't even know why he wants you back there so much. He keeps saying it is for the greater good and won't explain further."

"Typical old goat." Harry shrugged making Sirius laugh. "Anyway, I'm not going back to the Dursleys under any circumstances. If the old man sends me there Nick will take me with him."

"I don't know why but I don't feel uneasy in the slightest about the idea of you being rescued by people I know nothing about." Sirius

said quietly. "Maybe that means they're right and I shouldn't be a guardian."

"They're not right at all." Harry said defiantly. "I just don't need a father figure in my life. After all I have gotten this far without one. A close friend though I could use."

"Well, I'll shoot for somewhere in between and see how things go." Sirius laughed while pulling something out of his pocket. "Your dad and I used these while we were in detention. Just say my name into it and mine will vibrate and give off heat."

"Brilliant." Harry said quickly and took the mirror. "What you did with dad reminds me though, did you keep the notes on the Marauder's Map? I want to get some special versions made for gifts."

"I'll ask Moony." Sirius replied before taking a coy tone. "So if I'm going to be a friend rather than a father why don't you tell me about girls."

"Why does everyone ask me that?" Harry moaned up at the ceiling. "I have an answer but your not going to like it."

"I don't know about that." Sirius insisted.

"Alright, here goes." Harry lead in. "I'm seeing a snake."

"What's wrong with dating a Slytherin?" Sirius asked confused. "Let's see in your year there is the Greengrass girl, I saw her in the hospital wing a couple times. Good for you. The Greengrasses are a good family."

"No you don't understand. I'm seeing a snake." Harry switched to Parseltongue at this point. "Say hi Hande."

"Hi Hande!" The snake exclaimed sticking her head out of Harry's collar.

The whites of Sirius' eyes were visible all of the way around his irises. After not breathing for a few seconds he noticed that Harry was snickering. Sirius soon saw the joke. "Oh, so you think spring parseltongue on unsuspecting friends is funny do you?"

"The funniest. You're now the third person I've told." Harry mused. "I should probably tell the rest of the court though. They deserve to know."

"So only my cousin and Hermione know too." Sirius asked.

"No, not them. The twins." Harry said. "You'd like them a lot. Real pranksters."

"We've chatted." Sirius laughed. "I encouraged them to keep inventing. Maybe be hazardous to the world though, based on their notes."

After a few moments of good natured laughing Sirius suddenly stopped and regarded Harry. "You're not actually dating your snake, are you?"

HPCOC

"So the brown folder is a copy of my notes, the blue folder are the assignments that the Professors have said won't be graded because of how long ago they were assigned." Hermione started guiding Harry through his missing school work. "The red folder are things that are current with the class and the yellow folder are the assignments that still need to be turned in, but were already turned in by the class as a whole. Understand?"

"Wow, you did all this?" Harry asked stunned. "This is amazing Hermione. Thank you."

"You're welcome." She said, bashfully turning red. "I can set up a study schedule for you to get ready for the exams if you want."

"Thank you but no thank you." Harry hugged her. "I don't really need to study."

"HARRY!" Hermione shouted into his chest before pulling back. "You have to study, you won't get a good grade if you don't and then what will you do?"

"Have you been practicing your occlumency?" Harry asked.

"Um, not since you stopped helping us." Hermione blushed again.

"We were too distracted with you in the hospital and everything." Tonks added quietly.

"I'm going to be in the hospital a lot." Harry said flatly. "You'll never get anything done if you drop everything just for that."

"Why are you going to be in the hospital a lot?" Hermione asked concerned.

"Voldemort has been traipsing around the school all year." Harry shrugged. "He's clearly not dead. I'm his only target that hasn't died, he has a score to settle. Until he is gone I must assume I'm in a certain amount of danger."

"Doesn't that worry you?" Tonks asked shakily, Harry just shrugged again.

"You already knew!" Hermione concluded. "Whatever he was after, you knew it was here as bait. That's what you meant by 'a long time ago, sorta' wasn't it? You just didn't want us to worry."

"And Nick training you was because he knew You-Know-Who wasn't gone." Tonks added with confidence.

"Well, 'a long time ago, sorta' was actually referring to Halloween, but otherwise you two are very correct." Harry said grinning. "I wasn't allowed to tell anyone."

"Oh, that makes sense." Hermione smiled back. "Wait, Halloween?"

"The troll was distraction take one." Harry mimed two pieces of wood clacking together. "And the basilisk was take two."

"We're off topic. What does occlumency have to do with studying?" Hermione said shaking her head.

"Oh, right. Well at a certain level of proficiency you can the ability to store information very efficiently." Hermione's eyes grew wide at this. "If you work hard, by this time next year studying could be obsolete for the two of you too."

That night Tonks and Hermione were up late poring over the occlumency books Harry had gotten them that year.

HPCOC

This was the first morning that Harry would be waking up outside of the hospital wing again. Tonks of course couldn't waste the moment. And so it came to be that Harry woke up that morning to the sight of Tonks flying towards him through the air. "HARRY!"

Harry quickly rolled to the side and Tonks only caught mattress. "Good morning Nym."

"Morning! I'm glad you're not back in the hospital for something weird." Tonks said biting her lip and pulling Harry into a hug.

Harry laughed and motioned for Hermione to join the hug. "I should be done in there for this year. So don't worry. Food?"

Both girls nodded into him and then the three climbed out of bed. Harry put some clothes on and they made their way out of the tower.

Everyone in the Great Hall stopped eating and talking when they walked in. After only a moment of this Harry waved. "Good morning everyone."

Everyone turned their attention away from the trio as they made their way to the Ravenclaw table. Breakfast was progressing swimmingly while the girls filled Harry in on current potions work. None of them noticed the post arriving until a common barn owl swooped down to Harry. Harry quickly untied the letter. "Thank you. You're a very handsome bloke."

The owl puffed up proudly and took off while Harry unrolled the note. After a moment he sighed. "Seems that Dumbledore has told Snape to be extra rough on me in detention tonight."

"What do you think he'll make you do?" Hermione sounded very unsure. "I'm sure it can't be too bad, I mean...right?"

"I dunno." Harry said cheerfully. "We'll probably find out in class, one way or another."

"Why are you happy?" Tonks raised an eyebrow.

"I've got my free pass remember?" Harry asked smirking. "The note said that Dumbledore specifically told him that he didn't set an end time so Snape might set something up that will take all night to accomplish."

HPCOC

"Can anyone tell me why we must take caution while making the Steady Flame Compound?" Snape drawled. Harry raised his hand enthusiastically. "Mr. Potter?"

"From the time that the essences of the Flametongue Flower is added until there is no more water in the mixture it will react violently to any magic." Harry answered smugly.

"Correct." Snape sneered. "Can anyone else tell me the properties of the root wax of the boglily and why we use it in this compound? Entwhistle?"

"It is the only known water soluble wax in the magical world, which allows ingredients to be used that normally would be restricted because of the wax." Kevin said confidently. "Such as essence of Flametongue."

"Correct. The instructions are on the board." Snape said waving his wand making said instructions appear. "This substance is incredibly difficult to wash so try not to get any on yourself. When you're finished leave your cauldrons on the back table, I'll have them cleaned tonight."

Snape finished his statement with an evil smirk at Harry. As the class got to work Harry smiled to himself imagining the look that will be on Snape's face.

HPCOC

That evening after dinner Harry made his way down to the dungeons. Upon entering he noticed that there were more cauldrons piled up than just his class was able to produce. Snape must have had all of his classes today making the compound. Snape himself was

smirking at Harry. "I'm sure you know by now what your task is tonight. The cleaning solution is in the closet, and remember, no magic unless you wish to explode."

Harry merely smiled and walked up to the desk. He set a piece of parchment down in front of the confused professor and turned and walked out. Harry closed the door behind him and warped away just as Snape's frustrated scream found his ears.

HPCOC

"Severus, what are you doing here?" Dumbledore asked curiously as Snape stormed into his office. "I thought you would be with Mr. Potter in detention."

"The brat showed up and gave me this!" Snape threw the exemption note on Dumbledore's desk. "Then he just walked out like nothing was unusual."

"Why didn't you stop him?" Dumbledore asked picking up the paper. "Oh, I forgot about these, I believe Ms. Tonks has one as well."

"I tried to stop him, but he had disappeared completely within a few seconds of closing the door." Snape snarled.

"He reclaimed his father's cloak this winter." Dumbledore nodded sagely. "I'm sure he was just invisible."

"It was a mistake giving that to him." Snape sneered.

"I couldn't withhold an heirloom from him." Dumbledore defended. "Being his guardian granted me a lot of liberties but the laws don't allow for that."

"Since when have you cared about following the law?" Snape asked incredulously. Dumbledore just glared back.

HPCOC

"Oh look, you're on the front page." Tonks said the next morning, handing him a copy of the Prophet. "Not that it is unexpected."

The front page held a picture of Harry holding the Sword of Gryffindor while light was shining through the window into the Three Broomsticks in just such a manner that made Harry look especially heroic. Opposed to Harry, and facing his picture, was a picture of Dumbledore taken from a low angle making him look particularly menacing. Harry took one look at the headline then shot Dumbledore a cocky grin from his seat. Turning back to the paper he read.

The Leader of the Light and The Boy Who Lived at odds?

By: Rita Skeeter

Last week in the wake of the attack on Hogsmeade I, like many others, traveled to Hogwart's to seek information. When I got around to trying to talk to the hero of the hour, Harry Potter, the headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, intervened. Dumbledore turned us away informing us in no uncertain terms that Mr. Potter had no comment to make on the events of the day.

We were in for a shock the next day when our lunch was interrupted by an owl from none other than Harry Potter himself calling for interviews. Mr. Potter had arranged for us to meet in the Entrance Hall. So why, if Harry Potter didn't want to talk to the press, was he calling us together?

The first clue to this riddle came a few hours later when I was once again the recipient of an owl, this time notifying me that the venue had changed to the Three Broomsticks, which had suffered minor damage during the attack.

When I arrived at the Three Broomsticks a few minutes after two o'clock I was surprised to find not only two Hogwart's staff members but the Headmaster himself loitering about the common area, on high alert. My first instinct was to assume they were there for security, but they didn't seem to pay attention to anyone inside, only the people coming in, like they were waiting for someone.

Fearing for my story I entered the room Mr. Potter had reserved with trepidation. To my relief Mr. Potter and a friend of his named Nick were already there, waiting. Over the next few minutes my colleges from the Quibbler and Teen Witch Weekly arrived. Just before our scheduled start time of 2:30 we heard an angry shout from

downstairs. Mr. Potter then cast some impressive privacy wards and we started the questioning.

As it turns out when the Headmaster said that Mr. Potter didn't want to talk to the press, Mr. Potter was actually unconscious under the effects of dreamless sleep potion while recovering from the fight. Mr. Potter further claims that when he informed Headmaster Dumbledore of the arranged meeting, Dumbledore then attempted to stymie him. With the simple threat of denying us, the press, access to the school grounds, we were without a meeting place. Thus the change.

The three members of the Hogwart's staff were waiting for Harry to arrive. Their intention was to take him back to the school and prevent him from talking with us. The Headmaster was waiting outside the door when we left so I, sensing a story, hung back and listened in. Professor Dumbledore gave credence to Mr. Potter's story when he assigned Harry a detention for the very next day.

Over the next few days, with great assistance from my contacts with school aged children, I gathered word from the castle. The rumors are shocking. It would seem that our young savior started his school year by challenging old out-dated and divisive traditions, such as the house point system. An unfortunate but well known symptom of old age is unwillingness to accept change. Albus Dumbledore recently celebrated his 136th birthday. He was understandably upset with Mr. Potter's actions and according to the students the two of them were frequently at odds over various aspects of school life.

Rumors also persist that Professor Dumbledore is encouraging his teaching staff to be especially strict with Harry. I have also heard that Dumbledore used his position to prevent Lord Sirius Black from gaining the rightful guardianship of Harry Potter. I checked with the Ministry and currently Mr. Potter's guardians are Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Dursley, Lily Potter's muggle sister and brother-in-law. What is really interesting however is that Albus Dumbledore is listed as Harry Potter's Magical Guardian.

What is causing the conflict between these two heroes? What does Dumbledore have to gain by interfering with Lord Black from taking guardianship? How far will the Headmaster go to gain the upper hand? How does this reflect on his continued validity as headmaster?

Harry Potter's account of the day Page 4

What Dumbledore has to gain Page 6

Lord Sirius Black, Facts or Fables? Page 8

Harry was thrilled and wasn't hiding it. Rita had finally pulled through for him. He was very glad that he hadn't sent her a can of Raid for Christmas like he had planned. Fortunately, he could still use that as a threat if he needed to. He was grinning at the girls like the Cheshire Cat. "This is amazing! I bet this will put the spurs to Sirius' committee."

"Where did she hear all of these rumors?" Hermione asked.

"What do you mean?" Tonks replied. "Everything she mentioned is fairly common knowledge, well except for Dumbledore pushing harsher treatment and slowing up Sirius' case."

"Those rumors that matter though." Hermione said impatiently not noticing Blaise and Daphne walk up behind her.

"Hermione's right." Daphne said from directly behind the brunette, causing her to jump. "Sorry for sneaking up."

"It's okay." Hermione said chuckling. "You were saying something about me being right..."

Daphne laughed. "Well yes, it is very curious that she would be able to find out about those two things unless Harry told her."

"Oh, I didn't tell her." Harry admitted. "I was trying to focus on the basilisk story, no one seemed to care about it though..."

"So how do you think she got the story?" Blaise asked calmly.

"I suspect that she has some way of being undetectable and simply followed Dumbledore around listening to him." Harry speculated. "Don't ask me what method she used though, takes something special for Dumbledore not to be able to notice."

"Um, Dumbledore and Snape are both sending a death glare over here." Tonks worried. "Good thing this didn't come out yesterday."

"So how was your detention anyway?" Blaise inquired.

"Short." Harry smiled smugly. "Dumbledore gave me an exemption at Halloween. Snape was pissed. I wonder who ended up cleaning all those cauldrons. I hope the elves refused to."

Harry rushed through the rest of his breakfast before hurrying back up to the tower to call Sirius and discuss how the article will effect the time table.

HPCOC

The Quibbler came out that weekend. The magazine was passed to him from down the table.

Harry Potter reads The Quibbler out loud, his muggles listen!

By: Luna Lovegood

Finally someone has replied correctly to my ice breakers. Harry didn't miss a beat expressing knowledge of the jokes and subject matter with perfection. The only logical conclusion is that Harry Potter has been a devoted fan of The Quibbler for years.

Then he told us that he grew up with his muggle relatives. Since all family units know what each individual member is interested in this leads me to conclude that those same muggles know about The Quibbler and it's contents. Which would lead one to believe that the muggles also read The Quibbler but that would be violating the Statute of Secrecy.

However Harry claims to have trained through his whole life with his friend, Nick, who was also present. Clearly if someone was going to train a young wizard while allowing him to remain in a muggle neighborhood they were also going to teach said wizard about the Statute of Secrecy.

A quick check with the Ministry of Magic verified that they had never been called to the Dursley residence for any reason.

So we know that the muggles that Harry lived with have to have knowledge of The Quibbler since Harry Potter does. We know that Harry Potter has never violated the Statute of Secrecy. Finally we know that Harry could not have read The Quibbler to his muggles nor could his muggles have read The Quibbler on their own without violating the very same statute.

We at The Quibbler can only conclude that Harry Potter reads The Quibbler out loud when he receives his copy and makes sure to do it where his muggles are sure to be able to listen in. The Quibbler recognizes that we don't have any subscriptions in Harry Potter's name but would like to congratulate Henry Planter on his guile.

There were no words in reaction, just simple blank stares. After a few minutes of silent contemplation Harry finally spoke up somewhat lamely. "Well, The Quibbler has always been known for having real information if you can look passed the crazy conjecture."

HPCOC

By the end of the next week Harry was completely caught up on his homework. The final assignment was due to McGonagall and that Friday Harry and the girls dropped his work off before going to breakfast. They ended up arriving late enough that they had missed the post. Like many mornings before everyone looked their way as they walked in, but instead of turning back to their meals many of the girls glared.

"Why are they looking at us that way?" Hermione asked moving closer to Harry.

"Teen Witch Weekly must be out." Harry said with resignation. "Must be something inflammatory."

"Hey you three." Fred said casually walking up with George.

"Have you seen the article yet?" George asked.

"No, how bad is it?" Harry asked concerned.

"Oh, it isn't bad for Harry-" George started.

"But I certainly wouldn't want to be-" Fred continued.

"One of these two-

"Lovely ladies." Fred finished holding out a copy of the TWW, already opened to the relevant page.

Harry Potter's Girls?

By: Joan Fellows

I had a simple assignment when I went to the Three Broomsticks in Hogsmeade last week to meet with Harry Potter. All my editor asked of me was to find out about Harry's love life. I thought it would be easy. After all I am a 24 year old woman interrogating an 11 year old boy. Most boys his age would turn red at the mention of girls and then easily be badgered into admitting everything. Not Harry Potter.

I asked and got a stiff "No comment." as the reply and further questioning was merely ignored. His friend, Nick, however was a helpful well spring of little pieces of information.

The first of these helpful nuggets is also the most intriguing. While Nick was recounting his part in the events of the other day and the months leading up to it he said that he had spent the most time in the hospital wing with Harry, while "[Harry's] girls" spent the second most.

Throughout the rest of the conversation the number of sullen glares from Harry and knowing smirks from Nick made one question absolutely imperative; Who are Harry Potter's girls?

Fortunately I have a sister who is a seventh year Ravenclaw and while she is not directly inside Harry's circle, she is friendly with them. She wasn't willing to draw conclusions for us but she did fill us in on who would be considered Harry's closest friends.

In no particular order, sorted by house, we have: Nymphadora Tonks, first year Ravenclaw, metamorphmagus and daughter of Healer Andromeda Tonks, Hermione Granger, Muggleborn first year Ravenclaw, Blaise Zabini, first year Slytherin and Heir to Lady Zabini, Daphne Greengrass, first year Slytherin and Heiress to House Greengrass, Susan Bones, first year Hufflepuff, Heiress to House Bones and niece of the Head of the Department of Magical Law

Enforcement, Madam Amelia Bones, Hannah Abbott, first year Hufflepuff, and Fred and George Weasley, third year Gryffindors.

That's five girls, two being from Harry's own house. Anything further would just be speculation on my part but we here at Teen Witch Weekly will make sure to keep an eye on Nymphadora and Hermione.

"I can't believe it!" Hermione gasped.

"I know, it's incredible." Harry added disbelieving.

"I'm tempted to kill that witch." Tonks stressed the w quite strongly.

"All of the Harry Potter fangirls-" Fred said somberly

"Will be out for your blood." George added in the same tone.

"What? No." Hermione said loudly. "That's not it at all."

"It isn't?" The twins asked together.

"Don't be silly." Harry admonished.

"So what's wrong?" George asked brow furrowed.

"She listed me being Muggleborn first like it is the most important attribute about me!" Hermione shouted.

"She printed my name! TWICE!" Tonks continued.

"And out of all three reporters not one of them cared about the basilisk." Harry finished. "Makes me wonder why I even bothered in the first place."

The twins looked at them like they were crazy for a moment before laughing, the three Ravenclaws soon joined it.

HPCOC

The last month of the term passed without incident. Harry scored a perfect 99% on every exam, except for a perfect score in defense, and ended up overall top student in their year. Tonks ended up with

the highest score in Transfiguration and Hermione took top score in Charms.

Sirius' hearings finally came to fruition, the article helped greatly, and Harry was informed that he would be legally allowed to join Sirius on his birthday. At that point Sirius would come it to full guardian status and Harry would never have to see the Dursleys again. Harry had decided that he was only going to be at Privet Drive to sleep, and every morning he would pop off to the Manor. This way the old man's detectors won't register anything being suspicious. Harry didn't really think that Dumbledore actually expected him to stay there during the day though.

The day before the end of term Harry received a copy of the Marauder's notes on their map. They were now safely tucked into his trunk, which in turn was safely shrunken and tucked into his pocket. Harry enlarged the compartment of the train as they walked in, so that it could accommodate all nine of them.

Harry sat down and Tonks and Hermione took the seat to either side of them. They leaned on him lightly as the rest of their friends joined them. The train pulled out of Hogsmeade when Harry interrupted the conversations. "I have three things to discuss before we get to London. First of all, I'll be rejoining the magical world on my birthday. Sirius is throwing me a party and told me to invite all of you and a few others, but they'll be getting owls later."

"I'd love to go, but I will need someone to get me." Hermione said glumly. "Muggle household, no floo."

"That's not a problem." Harry assured her. "If nothing else I can send Nick or Sirius. Everyone else in?"

Everyone was nodding, then the twins countered. "Mum gave us explicit instructions to invite you to the burrow for some of the summer."

"She's been dying to meet you." Fred picked up when George stopped.

"My Aunt still wants to talk to you about the basilisk." Susan added.

"I think my dad wants to set us up with a marriage contract." Daphne said. "He's been trying to meet you since Christmas."

"Alright!" Harry said cutting off Hannah from including her parents' request. "I'll try to visit everyone when I can. Sound good? Moving on. I have a friend I would like you all to meet. The twins have already made her acquaintance. Everyone this is Hande. Hande this is everyone." He finished in parseltongue as he removed Hande from his pocket. He couldn't help but laugh at their shocked expressions, neither could the twins. "I'm a parselmouth, thought you'd like to know."

"So, does this mean you're dark or something?" Tonks asked carefully.

Harry laughed again. "No more than speaking English does. It's just got a bad rap."

"So, party, parseltongue, what's next?" Hannah said sarcastically. "Are you going to break your trace or something?"

"No silly, that was a while ago." Harry said coyly. "I'm going to break all of yours."

"You can seriously do that?" Hannah asked shocked again. "I was joking."

"Well your joke was frighteningly accurate." Harry said and he stood up and quietly cast a spell on each of them in turn. "There you go. Practice magic to your heart's content, just don't get caught or we're all in trouble."

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!" Hermione squealed hugging him tightly. "Mum and Dad were so sad that I couldn't show them anything I've learned. They'll be so happy."

The nine of them spent the rest of the ride joking, laughing, plotting and playing. All too soon they were pulling into King's Cross Station. Hermione and Tonks were the last two to leave Harry's side and they were therefore the last he said his parting words to. Harry pulled them both into a simultaneous hug. "I'm going to miss the two of you immensely."

"Me too." Harry's shoulder muffled Hermione's voice and the other two could barely make out what she said.

"But it will only be until the end of July right?" Tonks verified. "We can spend all of August together."

"I'd like that." Harry said as they crossed through the barrier to the muggle side. Harry spotted the Dursleys just as they spotted him. With another quick hug and a kiss on the cheek to both of them he said bye and went to join his relatives.

"Listen up boy!" Vernon said loudly once they climbed into the car. "You're going to have breakfast ready for us at eight every morning and then you're going to do chores until lunch and then again until dinner, if you earn dinner that is."

"Listen up tubby!" Harry replied in the same tone. "I'm being forced upon you without my consent. Fortunately I can leave every day. I'm only going to be in your house to sleep, I'm not doing a damn thing for you."

While Vernon was turning purple with rage Harry warped out of the car while it was going down the highway. After a quick stop at number 4 so Dumbledore's instruments would register his arrival he dug around in his trunk and found his key stone, and apparated directly to the rune circle he set up at the manor.

Harry decided, while he set about his work, that Nick and G.N.I.C.C were possibly the two best cover stories he had ever come up with on the spot. He also decided that Nick would start training Harry in hand to hand combat this summer. Harry smiled as his internal joke before calling upon some elves to set up a weight room.

HPCOC

The disembodied spirit that referred to itself as Voldemort finally freed itself from the lava pit that it was vanished to. He knew as soon as he arrived that he merely needed to go up, but magma was dense and hard to move through, even for something that's little more than a ghost. Either way he was out, and back in England by the looks of it.

Voldemort cast his senses out and felt the dull thrum of a nearby dark mark. A few hours later he managed to find the source, he was disappointed at what he found though. This death eater was his best bet but he was restrained under the Imperius Curse and an invisibility cloak. Voldemort wasn't in a position to be picky though.

AN:

So that's year one. Year two coming soon.

Malchior: I hope my band-aid is good enough.

Special thanks to Warlocke for grammar nazi'ing for this chapter. Corrections have been made. (and then of course I neglected to post the changes to the actual part that you read for a couple days...*sigh*)

AN: Just real quick I'd like to mention that Sunday, with the post of the last chapter, was the first time I have gotten more than 6k hits in a single day. AWESOME!

Harry Potter and the Children of Change Year 2: The Diary's Riddle.

"AAHH!" Harry shouted dropping the dementor bone and dodging out of the way of the fire. He stood up shakily and wobbled over to his work table. Picking up a fresh notebook he dipped a quill in ink and wrote boldly on the front.

DEMENTOR BONE HORCRUX DETECTOR SAFETY MANUAL

He opened it to the first page and filled in the first rule: Do not point directly at forehead.

These last few days had been rather humbling for Harry. When he warped to the manor from the Dursleys' he forgot that his homing beacon would be fried the first time he used it. Once you're able to travel on your own, it becomes rather humiliating to travel via house-elf. Harry, understandably, made the creation of a permanent homing beacon his highest priority. He only needed Marny to shuttle him around for three days. And now his experiments were trying to kill him.

Harry decided to use a femur for the Horcrux Detector, his first impulse was to use a hand and see if he could get it to literally point at the horcrux, but he had a better plan for the hands. The rune carving for that had only taken most of today. He'd just done his first test in fact, though the flames were unexpected.

"Marny, please bring me box number twenty-seven." Harry called to the empty room, a moment later a small box popped onto his desk. He opened the box and set Ravenclaw's Diadem on his desk before walking over to where the dementor bone landed. He picked it up and pointed it at the diadem from across the room. The end of the bone immediately started spraying sparks out, like one of those cheap muggle fireworks. Sighing in exasperation Harry rolled his eyes. "At least it is inconspicuous."

Chuckling at his sarcasm he watched the tip of the bone as he moved it closer to the diadem. What started out looking like a sparkler ended up looking like a pyromaniac's dream fusion of a

road flare, roman candle and flame thrower. The pyrotechnics stopped immediately if he ceased to be in contact with the bone. It seemed safe enough to be left so long as no one touched it.

After checking the time Harry decided to call it a night and conjured a metal box, just in case, and labeled it thirteen. He put the detector on that box and put the diadem back into twenty-seven. He added the entry to his parselscript list. If anyone found the list, managed to determine that it was an inventory and found the boxes it would still be random unless they also spoke parseltongue. It seemed a little excessive to Harry but it took virtually no effort to do, so why not?

Harry finished cleaning up his desk and work bench and sent the boxes into storage. He double checked that he had his end of the beacon and warped to his room on Privet Drive. He found himself asleep in the bed, so he decided to stay up for a few hours and get some more homework done. The first time he had used his time-turner to go back and sleep through his homework time Vernon barged in to demand something or another. In one look he registered that there was a Harry sleeping in the bed and a second Harry sitting at the desk looking at him. Vernon's poor heart couldn't take it and he had a heart attack.

Harry watched calmly as Vernon fell to the ground, struggling to stay alive. After considering for a moment Harry decided that it would be better to have the Dursleys in his debt until his birthday, he didn't care what happened to them after that. He briefly considered killing them for what they did to his other self. He decided that that wasn't good enough and immediately started plotting how to ruin their lives but leave them around to live with it. Vernon's meaty hand grabbing Harry's leg brought him out of his musings and once he remembered what was going on he casually picked up his wand and saved Vernon's life. Harry smiled down at him sheepishly "Sorry about that, I had a thought."

The next day Vernon went to the hospital and when he came home he had a new diet and exercise regime. Harry could tell that his relatives couldn't decide whether they should be grateful to Harry for saving Vernon, or hate him for using magic to do the saving. Harry reveled in their discomfort and now made it a point to walk through what ever room they were in often enough to keep them off balance.

Harry walked down into the kitchen to make himself something to snack on while doing his potions work. Fifteen minutes later Harry was making his way back up the stairs with some left over stir-fry and rice. Harry had been impressed that the Dursleys had remained silent the entire time he was down there. It would have been one thing if he had just been making himself food, but he made sure to make extra noise and mess just to bait them. Nothing, they were even having dinner! He walked in and they just shut up and let him do what ever he wanted to. They're no fun anymore, maybe I should have let the fatty die. Harry thought as he sat down at his desk.

Summer homework always confused Harry. Did this summer's work count towards our first year grades or our second? If first, how do they intend to change the grades after they've already been submitted? If second, how do they justify work done before our second year starts to be part of the second year? Furthermore if it were for the up coming year when it came time to choose electives wouldn't we be assigned work for those classes? Then again Trelawney and Hagrid aren't the most likely people to assign summer work. Meh, we'll see what arithmancy and ancient runes assigns next summer.

"Are you only going to be doing homework tonight Harry?" Hande asked from where she was curled up by sleeping Harry's face.

"Homework and maybe working on the mirror designs." Harry replied sympathetically. "If you're bored you can go down and bug the Dursleys."

One of Hande's favorite games was to go down in front of the muggles and start shifting her colors wildly. The Dursleys were convinced that the sentient snake had to be the Devil incarnate. Only the fear of Harry kept them from killing Hande whenever they had the chance. Everyone in the house was looking forward to July 31st.

"Can you use that charm to let me climb the walls?" Hande asked head peaking out from her coils.

"Alright." Harry said and silently cast the spell. A snickering Hande slithered out of the room changing colors to match the kitchen ceiling. Harry turned back to his essay and was working for a few

minutes before he heard a shrill scream from downstairs followed by the tinkle of shattering glass.

"BOY!" Vernon bellowed from downstairs. "GET DOWN HERE!"

"Coming!" Harry called down cheerfully, and made his way down the steps laughing. Harry looked forward to being older and heavier just for times like when he got to the bottom of the stairs. As soon as he set foot on the ground floor Vernon's meaty fist caught him on the side of the head. If Harry were bigger and heavier he would have just moved a little and kept his feet in place, but since he was still small he had to take a step to keep from falling over. That didn't effect his cheerful disposition however. "Did you need something?"

"THAT SNAKE HAS TO GO!" Vernon screamed. "IT ALMOST SCARED PETUNIA TO DEATH!"

"Could you keep it down?" Harry asked calmly. "I'm sleeping upstairs. Actually never mind."

Vernon suddenly found himself trying to shout again but with no sound coming out. It was only then that he noticed that Harry had his wand out. He turned puce and grabbed a knife out of the butcher block. Harry just stood there and let Vernon stab him all he wanted, he just turned the knife to rubber first.

When he stopped, Harry smiled at him. "Now that we know that you getting angry won't solve anything, I believe it is safe to say that you're done?"

When Vernon nodded Harry waved his wand and fixed the broken dish. "Fantastic! Now, your complaint has merit even though no damage was actually done. Hande, could you go hunt in the neighborhood for a while?"

"Sounds fun." Hande said and slithered down the wall and towards the door.

"Mrs. Figg has cats, far more than she needs." Harry called after her before turning back to a deathly pale Vernon. "Now then, she'll be gone until I call her back. Um, are you having another heart attack or something?" He asked rubbing his neck. "Whatever, you're on your own for this one. If you'll excuse me I was doing homework."

As Harry walked back up the stairs he canceled the silencing charm. He idly wondered if that serving platter would still be Petunia's favorite after being repaired with magic. It didn't really matter either way, so long as they got the message that he could do whatever he wanted whenever he wanted and there was nothing they could do about it.

A couple hours of uninterrupted work later Harry was done with yet another subject for school and had the designs drawn up for the mirrors, tomorrow he'd start working on them. Yawning Harry activated his time turner and when he arrived back in that evening he cast a muggle repelling charm on the door and a silencing spell on himself. He really didn't want to wake up when Vernon started yelling.

HPCOC

Across the country in Crouch Manor green light momentarily filled one window, silencing a voice forever.

HPCOC

Dan and Emma Granger had greatly enjoyed the show of magic their daughter had provided them over the last several days. It was really quite amazing, not to mention all of the little things she had fixed with that reparo spell. Hermione was telling them about and demonstrating a cooling spell, using water as her subject. Her story, understandably, had a lot of the class during which they learned the spell. Her story also contained a lot on the subject of Harry Potter. The third time she mentioned him within a minute Dan and Emma caught each other's eyes and they both came to the sudden realization that every story from school that Hermione had told them was intrinsically tied to Harry. Harry and that girl Tonks.

Emma was estactic that her daughter had finally found friends to be a big part of her life, instead of just teachers and books. She understood how important the two of them were to Hermione since Christmas. Emma really wanted to ask if it was just a crush or something real, but not only would Hermione have no means to know, she'd be to embarrassed to tell. She resigned herself to watching and waiting.

Dan was horrified that some boy had so obviously ensnared the heart of his little girl. While he had no issues with Hermione dating, he'd hoped that she would at least wait until she was married. He was particularly worried about the other girl. She didn't seem to have Hermione's self esteem issues and had a rare talent in common with Harry. He really didn't want Hermione to get hurt, or worse, become a Mormon.

HPCOC

The next morning Harry called for Marny when he arrived at the manor. A few minutes later she was heading off to Diagon Alley and Harry was making his way down to his potions lab. He'd been looking over Remus' notes on the Marauder's Map and felt that he could modify it, but he couldn't use the same mirror for communication that he would use for the map, each process required the mirror to be soaked in a specific potion for two days. Two different and reactive potions, naturally.

A few hours later Marny was back and delivered the mokeskin pouch that Harry had asked her to buy for him. The contents were what she was really sent out for though, and she was satisfied at how quickly she had filled it. The fourteen mirrors were retrieved first and divided between two bowls filled with the potions. Two ingots of steel came next and went directly into a crucible to melt. After that came a bag full of money from Harry's vault. Harry checked how much was in it and put it back into the pouch. As the steel melted down Harry transfigured the molds he would need.

Later as the molds were cooling Harry took the time he had free to run to Flourish and Blotts. He took the face of a wealthy but nondescript middle aged wizard and purchased a few books on magical stone carving and one on determining the properties of various magical ingredients. It looked like he would only need a few chips off of the stone to see everything that it can do. When Harry left he noticed Barty Crouch Sr. walking into Ollivander's, but dismissed it on accounts of knowing nothing about the man prior to the World Cup, and that was still two years away.

Harry apparated back to the manor and got to work. He wouldn't be done carving for almost a month and then there would still be testing and modifications. This project would probably take him right up to his birthday.

He had a little thing going for Hedwig too but that was easy enough to do in his off time.

HPCOC

"ALBUS!" A voice called from the fireplace, drawing Dumbledore from his bedchamber into his office.

"What is it Arabella?" Albus asked hurriedly.

"It's horrible Albus, I don't know what to do!" Mrs. Figg said dramatically.

"Alright, I'm coming through." Dumbledore said and immediately floo'd to Arabella's house as soon as her head got out of the way.
"Now, what's going on?"

"I suspect it's Death Eater activity, but if not it is certainly still a Dark Wizard." Arabella said nervously.

"Have they done something to Harry?" Albus finally prompted impatiently.

"To Harry?" Arabella asked confused. "The boy seems fine, but this is worse."

"Well out with it!" Albus demanded.

"Three of my cats have disappeared these last two weeks." Arabella said before looking around for unwanted listeners before whispering harshly. "I think they're being sacrificed."

"I don't think your cats are being sacrificed by the dark forces." Albus said lamely, heading back to the fireplace. "I would place the blame on cars, dogs, mean neighborhood boys and other predators, in that order, before I would blame a wizard. They might have even simply gotten lost or ran away."

"I have never lost a cat before though!" Arabella whined. "There has to be someone at fault!"

"Arabella enough!" Dumbledore turned and towered over her. "Unless your cats are attacking or being attacked by Harry Potter I don't care! Buy more cats if they matter that much to you, just don't bother me with them!"

"That's it!" Arabella shouted. "Harry must be behind this!"

"Why would Harry do anything to your cats?" Dumbledore asked exasperatedly as he threw floo powder into the fireplace. "I'm leaving. Have a nice day Arabella."

"But Albus!" Arabella protested as the fire whisked Dumbledore away. Arabella spent a couple of hours mourning and then collected all of her cats inside and didn't let them roam the neighborhood ever again. Hande was satisfied with three and didn't expect to need to eat again until August. When she found that they were all safely inside Hande decided to just go back to the Dursleys' for a while.

HPCOC

"Hedwig! Could you come down here please?" Harry called out the window. He was so relieved that he got the mirrors finished earlier than he expected. The harness for Hedwig was almost complete too. Two strips of basilisk hide will form an X over Hedwig's chest and came together on her back above her and below her wings so that there was only a single narrow strip between her wings. Where the bands crossed a silver badge with the Potter Crest stamped into it held them together, and was the base of the enchantments.

Hedwig swooped in through the window and settled on her perch. Hedwig was amazingly patient with the process and seemed to be looking forward to the promised results. To her a few uncomfortable fittings was little compared to the weather and wind proofing spells, let alone the reusable portkey function to get back to the manor with a press of her beak. Hedwig wasn't unaware of the prestige of having a house seal so proudly displayed either. So she just watched patiently as Harry fitted the harness onto her and made marks on it with a pencil.

"Alright girl, I think that should be it. Tomorrow it should be ready." Harry told her, removing the harness and tying a note to her leg. "Could you take this to Tonks please?"

Hedwig rolled her eyes and bobbed her head. She winged over to the window but before she left she heard Harry call out again. Turning her head she saw him holding up the harness. "Do you think a cape is too much?"

Hedwig ruffled her feathers in amusement and took to the skies.

HPCOC

There were a little over two weeks left before their daughter's twelfth birthday and Andromeda and Ted were watching her practically dance with excitement as she retrieved the letter from Harry Potter's beautiful snowy owl. Andromeda still had trouble convincing her co-workers at St. Mungos that her Nymphadora was actually thee Harry Potter's best friend.

Nymphadora had torn the letter open and she plopped back into her seat and started reading quickly while Hedwig flew over to the corner of the kitchen. "Nymphadora, no letters at dinner."

"But Mum..." Tonks whined.

"No buts missy." Andromeda said sternly. "Harry's letter will still be there when you've finished eating."

"And my food will still be here when I'm done reading." Tonks retorted.

"It isn't about the food and you know it!" Andromeda scolded. "I'm starting to think it may have been a bad idea to move here."

"What! Mum!" Tonks sputtered while another jaw at the table dropped. "You can't mean that, don't make me leave!"

"It's just a letter Andy." Sirius said.

"You don't have any say in this Siri." Andromeda said turning to her cousin.

"I did not spend ten years in a cell and reinstate you to the House of Black, just to be forced to live in this house with only Remus and Harry." Sirius protested. "No offense to them, but I intend to have as many people around me as I can. All three of you are staying here

and that's final. Let Tonks enjoy herself, she'll only be this age once."

"Fine." Andromeda said quietly. "But Nymphadora, in your reply tell Harry that you've been grounded until his birthday and that he shouldn't send anymore letters."

"WHAT!" Tonks shrieked. "That's so unfair!"

"What's unfair about it?" Andromeda asked hotly. "You're about to spend a month of your summer with your boyfriend, is that unfair? Does Harry think it's unfair?"

"Merlin Mum! Harry's not my boyfriend!" Tonks anguished blushing bright red and jumping. "And Harry doesn't know I'm here yet. It's supposed to be a birthday surprise."

"Nymphadora get back here!" Andromeda shouted at her daughter's fleeing back.

"Leave it Andy." Ted said quietly from her side. "This doesn't need to escalate any further."

"You're right." Andromeda said settling in her seat. "Do you think I should go apologize."

"Not while she is still angry." Ted said. "Although if we want to quicken the process we should send Sirius up to calm her down."

"What?" Sirius said looking up from his plate. "Why me?"

"If it was either of the two of us she would be hesitant to either talk about how mean her mother is or how dreamy Harry is." Ted said ignoring his wife's indignant noise at the word 'mean'. "She can talk about both with you. And you have enough prank experience to diffuse anything she might do for pay back."

In the end Sirius did go to Tonks and calmed her down. He almost managed to talk her down from a prank all together, but instead they set up something minor, that Sirius then warned Andromeda about and told her to walk into it willingly, and a long letter to Harry explaining the situation, sans living arrangements, in a way that was as unfair to Andromeda as they could manage. In the end everyone

found the resolution to be satisfactory enough to not pursue the issue any further.

HPCOC

A man walked into a dark room the night of July 24th. A second man was already waiting for him, neither needed introductions as they both knew who the other was. They didn't need to state their business, as they were both there for the same goal.

"He moves in a week." The first man stated. "Is everything ready?"

"Yes." Said second man. "I have some concerns though, she said he can respond decisively to surprises."

"Don't worry." The first man said as he turned to leave the room. "It'll be his birthday, Harry's guard will be down."

"I hope you know what you're doing." The second man whispered at the closing door.

AN:

So this chapter leaves us with some questions. Why fourteen mirrors? Will Arabella ever figure out what happened to her cats? And most importantly: Will Hedwig get a cape?

Two of these will be answered next time.

The morning of July 31st people all across the country woke up in different states. Harry Potter woke up in a blind panic. Tomorrow is Tonks' birthday and I didn't get her anything! AAHHH!

He was brainstorming over his predicament for twenty minutes before he remembered that he had promised her and Hermione each a Marauder's Map this year. He was crumpling up the paper when another forgotten birthday made him freeze. "MARNY!"

CRACK. "Yes, Harry Potter sir?"

"Are there any manly yet school dorm appropriate house plants anywhere on my property?" Harry stammered. "I need a gift for Neville!"

"I know just the plant!" Marny said urgently, less than a minute later he had made the round trip and was back holding a pot with a strange metallic bonsai tree. The trunk looked like it was made out of steel and the needles were mixed gold, silver and copper.

"That's perfect!" Harry was elated, although he wasn't sure when he would see Neville next and really didn't need to rush. Still, better safe than sorry. Now I just have to wait for Sirius.

HPCOC

Sirius was looking forward to everything that was to happen today. Everything would start in a couple hours when Sirius would be picking up Harry. That was a couple hours away though, so Sirius smiled and buried his nose in his girlfriend's hair and drifted back to sleep.

HPCOC

Dan was looking forward to the day with mixed feelings. Mr. Black had invited Dan's daughter over to celebrate her best friends' birthdays and Dan couldn't be happier that she had friends. That these same friends inspired such dramatic change in his little girl was intimidating, even though so far it all looked beneficial. Dan still wasn't happy that one of those best friends was a boy though, he felt silly about it and knew that it was just knee-jerk instinct, but that didn't make it any easier to ignore.

On top of all of that his wife was almost as excited as Hermione. He wasn't sure whether he should be reassured or terrified that his wife seemed to be supporting this development whole heartedly. Dan would finally get to meet the boy today, and he was planning a properly fatherly show of intimidation for the object of his daughter's desires.

HPCOC

Remus had his head resting on his hand as he examined his work from eye-level. He may have missed ten birthdays with Harry, but this cake should make up for the pastry part of that debt. He was sure of every last detail, if it was a prank it would be his masterpiece. Sirius, Tonks and Hermione were all counting on this to be perfect, so Moony did the research.

Smiling to himself and picking up his head, Remus took a drink of his coffee and then saw the clock. He calmly took another sip of coffee and then inhaled deeply. "PADFOOT! HAVE YOU LEFT YET?"

"What?" A sleepy sounding Sirius yelled back.

"You were supposed to have left fifteen minutes ago!" Remus shouted. "Gwen! Shove him off the bed!"

A few seconds later there was an indignant squawk. "He didn't mean that!"

"Yes I did!" Remus called merrily contradicting Sirius.

"Will you both SHUT UP!" Andromeda bellowed from her room.

"FINE!" Sirius yelled as loud as he could.

"You're such children!" Tonks taunted from her room.

"She has a point." A woman in her late twenties and black hair said as she walked into the kitchen. After pouring herself a cup of coffee she meandered over to join Remus at the table. When she got there she bent down and gave him a quick kiss. "Morning honey."

"Morning Hestia." Remus replied with a smile. Just then Sirius stumbled through, shirt half off and backwards. Remus cocked an eyebrow, he didn't think Sirius was really sleeping this late. "What were you doing?"

"Nothing." Sirius said a little too quickly as he pulled his shirt back into place. "I just fell back asleep and Gwen didn't wake me."

"Uh-huh." Hestia said skeptically.

"I'm serious." Sirius said with a smirk and disapparated with a soft crack. A moment later a knock came from the front of the house signifying the first of the guests.

HPCOC

Harry was standing in the living room of the Dursley house for what he hoped to be the last time. Sirius was late and the Dursleys were making sure Harry knew. Their taunts got much easier to ignore once Harry realized they only had three things to say, and just repeated themselves as many times as they could. The third time through Harry started to debate whether or not he should just warp to Grimmauld Place or not. If he did he would be away from these insufferable muggles, but then he would have to explain how he knew where he was going.

"Looks like your godfather doesn't want you around any more than we do." Vernon gloated. "I would never be late to pick up Dudley. How about you Petunia?"

"Of course not!" Petunia looked horrified. "I'm always there for people who matter."

Dudley nodded happily, chins bouncing the whole time. "Yea, no one likes you Potter!"

"Really original Dud." Harry said completely bored.

"So what does this godfather of yours do anyway?" Vernon asked pointedly bring up the second topic of choice. "Probably nothing, like your worthless unemployed lay-about father."

"I bet he does drugs." Dudley suggested helpfully.

"If he is the mangy one with long hair I don't doubt it." Petunia said scornfully. "What is with you freaks and long hair?"

And there is number three, sad really. Harry thought ruefully. He didn't really care about hair and didn't think it was anything other than a simple cultural difference, so he shrugged. "When you're as obscenely wealthy as myself or Sirius no one really cares how you do your hair."

"You? Wealthy?" Petunia scoffed.

"Obscenely wealthy." Harry smirked. "More money than fatty here will ever conceive of having."

"Prove it." Dudley smiled thinking that he had trapped Harry in his own bluff.

Harry held up his hand to show off the gold signet ring of House Potter. "I found this at the beginning of the summer at my manor. The one in France, not either of the English or Italian ones, and did some magic-y stuff to link it to my sword, it really wasn't that hard, the sword was designed for it. With me so far? Good, because I can use this ring to summon that same sword from anywhere on the planet." Harry held his right hand forward and summoned the Sword of Gryffindor. "This sword is solid silver, studded with rubies and about a thousand years old. The correct collector would pay enough for me to buy the entire city block, maybe several, without a loan. I use it to kill snakes." He dropped the sword unceremoniously and watched as it vanished before hitting the floor. "That was the most expensive thing I had immediate access to, the really valuable stuff stays on the property."

For the first time in the last twenty minutes the Dursleys were finally doing something other than berating Harry. He watched them imitate fish for a few moments before he noticed a large black dog defecating in the flower bed. Laughing Harry jumped out of his seat and hurried to open the door. Padfoot came barreling in and started tearing around the living room and kitchen, knocking over as many things as he could.

"GET THAT BEAST OUT OF HERE!" Petunia shrieked over Harry's laughter.

"Hey! I take offense to that!" Sirius said as he took his human form.
"I haven't been a beast since I was a teenager!"

"I think we'd better make our exit Padfoot." Harry said as Petunia collapsed in a dead faint. "Petunia is out which means the fat one will get mad."

"Right...uh...which one is the fat one?" Sirius asked.

"The one who is about to have a stroke." Harry said pointing to the furious Vernon.

"Still not sure which one you're talking about, but it doesn't matter." Sirius smiled. "Are you all packed?"

"Yup, it's all shrunken and in my pocket too." Harry replied walking towards the stairs. "I just need to grab Hedwig and Hande and we can go."

"Just send Hedwig ahead, we have to make a stop at the ministry first for one last piece of paperwork." Sirius called as Harry walked up the stairs. "Then no more heathens ever!"

"HEATHENS!" Vernon bellowed. "YOU THINK WE'RE THE HEATHENS!"

Sirius looked up at the ceiling for a moment in concentration and bobbed his head back and forth for a few seconds. "Yea heathen sounds fairly accurate. To deny magic is to deny the divine gift to man."

"Doesn't God say magic is evil though?" Dudley asked looking to Vernon.

"Jesus himself said it son." Vernon reassured the boy.

"Jesus was a wizard." Sirius snorted. "Best con man in the last two thousand years too."

"Really?" Harry asked as he came back down the stairs. "What about Merlin?"

"Merlin was the real deal." Sirius said. "Much more powerful than Jesus, Merlin however didn't trick a bunch of muggles into thinking he was a god."

"Huh." Harry shrugged.

"I'LL HAVE NO MORE OF THIS BLASPHEMY IN MY HOUSE!" Harry idly wondered how far the blood would spurt if someone poked Vernon's face with a pin right now. "GET OUT!"

"Ready?" Harry turned to Sirius.

"Ready." Sirius replied placing a hand on Harry's shoulder. "Have you ever side-along apparated before?"

"More times than I care to count." Harry answered honestly and a moment later they were standing behind The Leaky Cauldron. "You're better at that then most."

"I try." Sirius said casually, walking over to the back wall and tapping the bricks with his wand. "Come on, the sooner we get to the Ministry the sooner we can leave."

Watching the bricks of the wall move out of the way to make the gateway to Diagon Alley would always be one of Harry's favorite events. In his last life Hagrid collected him from that shack in the ocean and the opening of this arch was the first time that Harry actually believed in magic. It seemed silly now, since Hagrid had used magic that was less likely to be a trick, Harry supposed it was just seeing so many people in on the act that convinced Harry it was real.

On the other hand it also represented Harry's departure from anonymity to fame, but that wasn't so much of a problem for Harry any more. Heads turned as Harry and Sirius walked through, the arch was rarely used as most people simply apparated into the alley proper. More heads started turning when the news of who they were started getting passed around. By the time they had reached the Ministry, every shopper had stopped what they were doing, even some shop keepers were coming outside.

"That's rather creepy, can someone tell them to stop?" Harry whined to Sirius as they entered.

"It'll be worse tomorrow." Sirius smiled slightly.

"Why's that?" Harry asked concerned.

"Oh, you'll find out tonight." Sirius was openly grinning now before stepping up to the security desk. "Sirius Black and Harry Potter for the Department of Welfare for Magical Children."

The security guard Sirius was talking to was young and staring at Harry, just like everyone outside. Fortunately for everyone the second guard was more experienced and was able to actually talk.
"Put your wand in the tray please, sir."

Sirius dropped his wand in the tray for a couple of seconds before removing it and prompting Harry to do the same. Within a minute the two of them were heading towards the offices they needed and then the first guard decided to talk. "I was expecting him to be bigger, I mean he killed a basilisk you'd think there'd be a little meat on him."

"Like this?" Harry demanded angrily, spinning on his heel, gaining a few inches of height and a stone of muscle mass.

The guard's face drained of blood as he realized that he may have been a little louder than he intended. After a few failed starts he stammered "Um, yes sir?"

"Perfectly understandable." Harry said smiling and reverting to his normal shape. He turned back around and motioned for Sirius to continue.

"That wasn't very nice." Sirius said once they were safely away from the desk.

"Doesn't mean it wasn't fun." Harry smirked and pointed. "I think that's our door."

"What kind of name is Belinda Plofter." Sirius asked looking at the nameplate. "It makes fun of itself."

"That wasn't very nice." Harry said smugly, while opening the door.

"Hush you." Sirius joked and walked up to the desk. "Excuse me miss. I need to finish the final step of claiming guardianship-"

"You'll need to fill out forms 22b, 106-4 and both of you will need to submit a sample of blood." The lady interrupted bored and pulled two huge stacks of paper out of a drawer. "Waiting room is two doors down."

"I'm sorry but I don't need to fill out-" Sirius started to explain, only to be cut off again.

"Sir, everyone needs to fill out the forms." She said looking at him plainly.

"You don't understand-

"You can't get around policy just because you're famous." She cut him off again rudely.

"I wasn't trying to, if you'd just listen-

"Sir there is nothing you can say that will get you out of doing the paperwork." She turned back to The Daily Prophet and started reading again.

"YOU! YOU STUPID! GAHH!" Sirius sputtered and in one movement swept his arm across Plofter's desk scattering her papers all over the floor. He pulled a stack of papers out of his robes and slammed them down on the now empty desk. "I don't have to fill out the paperwork because I ALREADY DID!"

"Well why didn't you just say that?" Plofter asked irritatedly. "Now look at this mess I'm going to have to clean up!"

"Just shut up and do your job." Sirius grumbled.

"Fine!" Plofter huffed and pulled two vials out of her pocket. "Three drops of blood in each of these vials, one for you and one for Harry Potter."

Sirius quickly grabbed the vials and turned to Harry, only to find him doubled over a chair, holding on for dear life and laughing so hard that he had stopped making noise. Sirius watched in silence for a

few seconds as Harry's face went from red to purple. "BREATHE HARRY, BREATHE!" Sirius shouted before bursting into laughter himself. Belinda just looked on in confusion.

A few minutes and many wheezing gasps later they had pricked their fingers and filled the vials, with those sent off for verification all they had to do was wait. After waiting a few minutes Sirius finally broke the silence. "So how 'bout them Harpies?"

"Doing pretty good this season I heard." Harry answered conversationally.

"Big improvements since they appointed a new captain." Sirius nodded sagely.

"I didn't know you were such a Holyhead fan." Harry admitted.

"A team full of women?" Sirius looked at Harry like he grew a second head. "How could I not be a fan?"

"When I got that letter telling me you were seeing someone I assumed Moony." Harry teased. "Other possibilities hadn't even occurred to me."

"Ha ha." Sirius said flatly. "You're so funny."

"I know." Harry said cheerily.

Sirius rolled his eyes. "So what's your team?"

"I don't have one that I follow exclusively." Harry shrugged. "But I have a good feeling about the next couple of years for Belgium."

"Belgium? Really?" Sirius flabbergasted. "That's random."

"Meh." Harry said as the verification paperwork arrived back on the desk.

"Alright you two." Belinda said demurely. "Looks like everything is set. Expect an owl within the week with your copy of the certificate."

"FANTASTIC!" Sirius shouted jumping to his feet. "Come on Harry, we've got other things to do!"

"What else do we have to do?" Harry asked standing up.

"Well tomorrow we're having a three way birthday party for you, Tonks and Neville. I figured that trapped with muggles you would need to get gifts." Sirius said confidently.

"Nope!" Harry exclaimed. "Already taken care of."

"Excellent, then just let me pop off to the lou real quick and we can go home." Sirius said pointing to the door. "Are you old enough to stay out here and not get lost or do you need supervision."

"That is possibly the most patronizing thing you've ever said to me." Harry scowled. "I am perfectly capable of waiting."

"Excellent." Sirius nodded and started walking towards the door. "Just wait here then."

"If we're apparating home why didn't you just wait?" Harry asked five minutes later when Sirius rejoined him.

"And splinch my bladder?" Harry couldn't help but shudder. "I don't think so!"

"Fair enough." Harry said as they started their way over to an apparition point.

When they got there Sirius offered his arm grinning like the Cheshire Cat. "And away we go."

They landed in the dark parlor of Grimmauld Place and Harry could immediately tell they were surrounded. Sirius apparating in was clearly the cue as people started jumping out from behind things, shouting. Harry wasted no time and dropped to the floor rolling left and firing two stunners to the right. When he got his feet back under him he cast a quick dome shield charm and then looked at his assailants.

HPCOC

Ginny Weasley was having a fairly infuriating day. The twins had been invited by name to Harry Potter's birthday party and she was

relegated to being simply part of their family. Ginny still didn't understand why the whole family was invited. Ron barely even spoke to Harry and Percy, well he was Percy. Ginny herself was thrilled by the invite initially, after all she'd finally get to meet the boy of her dreams, but panic set in when she realized she didn't have a gift.

She had spent the entire morning stressed out about that before her mum told her that it was taken care of. She had let out a sigh of relief at that and decided to pick out what she was going to wear. Three hours later when Molly went upstairs to inform Ginny that they were leaving in half an hour, she found Ginny sitting on her bed crying with a different outfit in wadded each hand. Twenty minutes later Ginny was putting on a third outfit that Molly had helped her pick out, this outfit wasn't crushed or tear soaked either, which was a big bonus.

Half an hour after that Ginny was hiding behind a couch waiting for Sirius and Harry to apparate in. Sirius' patronus had been in a moment ago and told them to get ready. Finally she heard the sound of arrival and leaped from her hiding spot. "SURPRI-" Ginny was cut off as a blast of red light hit her arm and she collapsed to the ground.

HPCOC

"Surprise?" Sirius called lamely from the middle of the room.

"I thought you said the party was tomorrow!" Harry shouted rounding on Sirius and dropping his shield.

"That's the surprise." Sirius rolled his eyes and reached into his pocket. After a few minutes of digging he withdrew a small bag and tossed it to Tonks.

"Told you." She said catching the bag before smiling at Harry and running at him for a hug. Hermione was close on her heels.

"Nice aim Harry." Remus said from the far side of the room. When Harry turned he saw two red heads unconscious on the floor. "Two stunners fired blindly and hit the only two Weasley women in the country."

He walked over as Remus and Arthur revived them, and Harry offered Ginny a hand. "Erm, sorry about that. Let me know if there is anything I can do to make up for it."

Ginny was blushing harder than she ever had in her life and was concerned that she would black out again because of it. Finally after she had gotten back on her feet she managed to whisper. "It's okay, you don't have to."

"So we're good then?" Harry asked smiling, Wonder if she would have preferred to stick her elbow in a butter dish than have this happen.

"We're good." Ginny squeaked then broke down and fled to the other side of the room.

Harry turned to Molly and cringed at the wistful, far away look on her face and knew that she was envisioning a future wedding and family with The-Boy-Who-Lived. It was strange that, even though he had started a family with her in the other time line, Harry had no inclination to get to know Ginny at all. A passive legilimency probe showed an unhealthy level of obsession focused on him, he moved on to Molly and found that she was still fantasizing about the dream wedding. Note to self, keep distance from both and hope they mellow, like I think they did last time. Intentionally boosting my reputation probably will make this harder.

With a nod to Arthur Harry turned to take in the details of the party. There was a table of presents, in three piles and three small cakes. Harry noticed that one of the cakes looked exactly like Number 4 and assumed that one was his. Above the table was a banner wishing Neville, Tonks and himself a happy birthday. Then he turned to look at the attendees.

Not surprisingly all eight of the court were there along with all of the other first year Ravenclaws and all of the first year Gryffindors. All of the students were accompanied by their families it seemed. That sudden realization had Harry looking around until he found Lucius Malfoy. He bit back his rage at having the Death Eater here, this wasn't the time to act after all. Just when he was about to continue on Lucius looked at him and smirked triumphantly.

What the hell does that mean? He's supposed to plant the journal on Ginny later, did he do it already? There's no way I could be lucky enough for him to have thought it was a good gift idea for me. If only I could bring out my detector without setting everyone on fire. Harry shuddered and decided that once everyone left and Sirius had gone to sleep he would sweep the house, and pick up the locket while he's at it. What if he already planted it on someone else entirely and is smirking because he thinks my demise is ensured. Grr. I wish there was a way to just kill him and get away with it, and not lose allies in the process.

Harry moved on and was mildly surprised when he saw Lisa. He made note to make sure to talk to her later. He recognized several order members and assumed that they were friends of Sirius and Remus. Sirius was currently talking to a young woman, whose back was to Harry. As if on cue Sirius looked over and made a motion to the girl to follow him. As he started walking towards Harry the girl turned and Harry saw her face. "Gwenog Jones?" He blurted out.

"Oh, good, I won't need to introduce myself." Gwenog laughed. "Since we'll be seeing a lot of each other I'd rather you call me Gwen."

"Wait, what?" Harry frowned. "Why will we be seeing a lot of each other?"

"Gwen is my girlfriend." Sirius said smugly. "She lives here."

"Oh." Harry said quietly . "I guess that explains why you're such a Holyhead fan. Well Gwen, Harry doesn't shorten to anything decent so I'm afraid you'll still be stuck with two syllables." Harry offered her his hand.

"That's is perfectly acceptable." Gwen smiled, shaking Harry's hand. "Much better than Sirius with three syllables."

"Hey!" Sirius cried indignantly, making the other two laugh.

"Congratulations on making Captain by the way." Harry said off handedly.

"What are you talking about?" Gwen asked.

SHIT! "Umm...Never mind, pretend I didn't say anything." Harry stammered. "So how did you two meet?"

"My sister, Hestia, introduced us, we double dated with her and Moony." Gwen said quickly. "Back to me being Captain. How do you know? The decision isn't scheduled to be announced to even the team until later this week."

"Look, I'm not supposed to know and I'm really not supposed to talk about how I know, so just drop it?" Harry pleaded, she just raised an eyebrow.

"Only because it's your birthday." She relented with a small smile.

"Thank you." Harry sighed.

"Hey Gwen! Did you tell Harry about flying lessons yet?" Tonks called running over.

"No, she didn't." Harry said thankful for the change of subject.

"I've been coaching her, and I expect her to make the house team this year." Gwen crossed her arms and looked at Tonks pointedly.

"Don't worry, I will, I promise." Tonks said and took Harry's hand. "Come on I wanna show you my broom!" Once she pulled him out of the room she looked at him. "You looked like you needed rescuing."

"I did. Thank you." Harry beamed. "Happy birthday."

"Happy birthday." She leaned in and gave him a quick peck on the cheek. "Now come on, my broom is in my room."

"Wait, let's get Hermione and everyone." Harry pulled back.

"Taken care of. I figured that we could use this time to catch up real quick in private." Tonks smiled.

"You're brilliant." Harry grinned. "Do you know what room I'll be staying in?"

"Yea, it's right across from mine." Tonks replied as they got to the second floor. I've dropped three hints now, he's usually sharper than this, must be the day.

"Let's stop there first so I can empty my pockets." Harry said and she motioned to a door. There was a brass plate on it that read: Lord Harry James "The-Boy-Who-Lived" Potter "Really, whose idea was it to add the titles?"

"Originally it was just going to be your initials, but I wanted 'BWL' instead." Tonks explained smiling. "Thought it would be a small enough joke to not be annoying, but then Sirius got the plate made like that. I actually think it is better, and Sirius said that it will expand to add any other titles you pick up."

"I'm alright with that, but just be prepared for retribution." Harry gave her a side long glance. "Nymmy."

"How many times will I have to ask you not to call me that?" Tonks demanded irritatedly.

"How ever many times it takes to convince me you don't actually like it." Harry smirked, opening the door. "And then a few more times for good measure."

Even though he was already prepared for the opulence of the House of Black, ten years of living at the Dursleys still made the room enough of a change to draw a shocked gasp. The walls were painted with a metallic bronze hued paint that looked very close to the real metal. There was a large oak four poster bed with royal blue curtains. Hedwig had already found her way here and was sitting on the top of one of the posts, seemingly waiting for him because when he noticed her she puffed up regally and pecked the Potter emblem on her harness, making the cape unfurl behind her. Hedwig made a point to look at her capes and then at the curtains on the bed.

"They match!" Harry laughed. "I hadn't thought of that at all."

"You gave Hedwig a cape?" Tonks asked. "Doesn't that get in the way when she's flying?"

"Hedwig, want to show off to all my friends?" Hedwig hooted merrily and bobbed her head. "Good, we're going over there as soon as I finish looking around."

The rest of the room contained a large wardrobe on one wall, between the windows, Harry's bed was on the same wall but off to the left side. In the right hand corner of that wall was a large desk and, along the right wall a few large bookshelves separated the desk from a raised work bench, for potions or carving or anything really. The left hand wall was another window and a full length mirror. The wall he was at, opposing the windows, had the door to the hallway and, to Harry's surprise, a Nimbus 2001 mounted on two hooks.

"They were just released to the public last week." Tonks said when she saw where he was looking. "Fastest brooms yet. Sirius got one for me too."

I'm still faster. Harry thought slightly saddened by that, before taking an awestruck expression. "Wow."

"I've been telling Gwen about your flying all summer." Tonks admitted. "I think she is looking forward to seeing you fly for herself."

"Well, I'll try not to disappoint her." Harry said as he withdrew his trunk and enlarged it at the foot of the bed. He then reached out and grabbed one of the posts. "Hande, this is my new room and I really don't know how most of the people downstairs will react to finding out about you, it's really safer if you would just hang out up here."

"Alright Harry, it was too loud to be relaxing down there anyway." Hande replied as she crawled out of his sleeve and down the post.

"I know there is nothing wrong with it, but that is still really weird to watch." Tonks quipped. "Now come on!"

"One more moment." Harry said and opened his trunk and took out a small box and the plant for Neville. "Alright, let's go."

"What's that stuff?" Tonks asked as she walked across the hall and opened the door to her room.

"You'll see." Harry managed to say before the court started greeting him. After that was done he opened the box and started distributing

small rectangular steel boxes with a clasp on the front. They opened like a clam shell and each had a small rectangular mirror on the top half. The recipient's name was engraved across the top, and once more on the outside of the shell. Hermione and Tonks each had a second mirror on the lower half of theirs. Those two also were significantly more ornately decorated inside and out. Harry's matched those two.

Naturally the twins had opened theirs and figure out how to call each other before Harry got finished making the rounds. "As the twins have demonstrated these boxes open up and the top half has a mirror, all of these mirrors are linked with each other and any of us can contact any of us by simply calling the target's name. Each mirror is specifically keyed to each of you, and no one else can use your mirror, except perhaps the twins."

This immediately prompted the twins to switch mirrors and confirm that they could indeed use each others. Harry nodded to them. "If you call more than one name you can project all of the participants of the conversation, like so."

Harry called Fred and George into his own mirror followed with a quick pinch and throw motion. A moment later a second, translucent, set of twins appeared. "One their mirrors it should be split so half the mirror is me and half is the other one of them."

"These are really cool." Blaise said appreciatively.

"Yea, how'd you think of this?" Susan asked.

"Sirius gave me a mirror earlier that was my father's half of the pair for the two of them." Harry explained. "Gnicc helped with the modifications."

"Why do Tonks and I have a second mirror?" Hermione had her mirror an inch away from her nose and seemed to be examining it in close detail.

"That's the Marauder's Map version two." Harry beamed. "Those are your birthday presents. Turn the circular Celtic Knot at the top right corner of the mirror to activate it."

"Ouch!" Hermione squeaked as she did just that and the knot drew blood and she stuck her thumb in her mouth before muttering around her digit. "What gives?"

"Sorry, it takes a drop of blood as an extra safety precaution, must have slipped my mind because I activated mine a few weeks ago." Harry walked over and gave her a hug.

"Ouch!" Tonks squealed. "Can I have a hug now too?"

Harry couldn't help but laugh and oblige. "Now that they're linked to you all you have to do to make the map appear is turn that knot, and turn it back to make the map disappear. The big advancement we made, actually the original Marauders should be here for that demo. I'll be right back."

He grabbed the plant and ran downstairs. Neville saw him and immediately noticed the plant and ran over. "Is that a Tibetan Bonsai Alloy?"

Harry lifted it up and checked the label. "That's exactly right! You know about these?"

"Yea they're really rare, you're so lucky to have gotten one. Who gave it to you?" Neville asked enviously.

"It's not a present for me." Harry smiled and held it out. "Happy Birthday Neville, I'm glad I didn't have to wait until September to get this to you."

"Wh-what?" Neville shook his head, completely gob smacked. "I can't accept this, it's too much."

"Neville, if it was too much I wouldn't be giving it as a gift." Harry reassured him. "It's nothing, really."

"It's nothing'?" Neville sputtered but took the plant from Harry. "It's the single most expensive thing I have ever received. Thank you."

"You're welcome, I was going to just put it on the gift table with your pile, I can still do that if you want." Harry offered.

"No thank you, I'll walk it over myself." Neville said now staring intently at his new acquisition. As he wandered off Harry decided that he wasn't going to be much good for anything else today.

"PADFOOT! MOONY!" Harry shouted drawing the attention of the two Marauders. "I require your presence, if you're not busy that is, I mean it isn't really that important but we're all waiting on you."

It took them almost a minute to excuse themselves and make their way over to Harry, who promptly motioned for them to follow and led them back up to Tonk's room. Wait Tonk's room! She's living here?

"Tonks!" Harry shouted as he walked in, making everyone jump. "When were you planning on telling me you were living here?"

Tonks looked at him surprised for a moment before giggling like crazy. "Took you long enough. I thought you would have figured it out before we even came upstairs the first time."

"So there is Sirius, you, Gwen and now myself all living here?" Harry recapped. "Does anyone else live here?"

"Just Andy, Ted, Hestia and myself." Remus informed him laughing as Harry's jaw dropped.

"Well, I was tired of being alone." Sirius defended himself when Harry's inquisitive gaze hit him.

"Can Hermione and her parents move in too?" Harry asked, not noticing the size of the smile on Hermione and Tonks' faces.

"He offered, but my parents said no." Hermione said still beaming as he turned to her. "But Sirius was able to use his new found political power to get my house cleared for the Floo Network. Even without sleeping here, I'll still be around all the time. Can't get rid of me that easy bub."

"Why would I want to get rid of you?" Harry beamed back. "To the presentation though, Ladies and Gentlemen may I present to you the Marauder's Map version two in all its splendor!"

Harry took his own mirror out of his pocket and quickly activated the map function. He used the same pinch and throw motion that he

used to project both of the twins, but this time instead of people showing up there was suddenly a perfect one meter cubed representation of Hogwart's. Instead of dots with name flags this map had small pillars of light. "The white lights are humans and, the yellow are ghosts, the pink is Peeves and the red are house elves. One of the functions of all of your mirrors hides you from these three maps as well as the original, so long as you carry your mirror. That reminds me. Padfoot, Moony I have a communications mirror for both of you, and the original Marauder's Map if you want it."

Harry handed a mirror to each of them and stood back while they whispered back and forth for a few seconds. With a nod to each other Remus turned towards the children. "The map was confiscated from us our seventh year and then the twins got it back, right?"

"Right." The twins chorused.

"Then the map should go back to them." Remus said firmly, leaving no room for argument. "They deserve to carry on our legacy."

"Is it Harry's birthday," Fred looked to George.

"Or ours?" George asked him.

"Either way." Fred turned back to the Marauders

"That is the best birthday present we've ever received." George whispered reverently.

"You honor us."

"We're not worthy."

"Shut up and say thank you!" Hannah shouted.

"It's like they need to pontificate about everything." Daphne shook her head.

"I'll be right back." Harry said as the twins visibly deflated, and rushed over to his room. A moment of digging he had the map in hand. "Oh, Hedwig, why didn't you come with us earlier? Well come on."

Hedwig flapped awkwardly across the room and landed heavier than normal on his shoulder. "Is it really that bad to fly with the cape out? Well you know how to put it away, so don't blame me."

Hedwig hooted indignantly as Harry walked back into Tonks' room. This time he noticed her name plate said 'N. Tonks'. Well that won't do. Harry quickly waved his wand and changed the sign, he wondered how long it would take her to notice, he looked into the room and noted that she didn't seem to be looking anywhere that would even have the door in its periphery. He handed the map to the twins and set Hedwig down on the desk. "Okay Hedwig! Strut your stuff!"

Hedwig hooted softly and hopped so that her back was to the audience. She bent her head down and took the edge of her cape in her beak and then extended that wing, therefore pulling the cape taught and showing off the bronze version of the Potter crest embroidered in the middle of the Royal Blue cape. The onlookers ooh'd and aah'd in between giggling at the owls actions.

With a quick flap of her wings Hedwig got a little bit of air and spun to face them. She puffed herself up into a rigid example of perfect owl posture and after a second of military perfection she quickly pecked the crest and there was a quick zipping sound as her cape retracted. She took off and flew around the room a couple of times, but there wasn't enough air to properly show off the wind dampening enchantment. Slightly disappointed she landed on Harry's head and pecked the crest one last time and the whole harness vanished and a small silver band appeared around her leg. Then she spread her wings and dipped into what could only be a bow. Her audience applauded appreciatively.

"That harness was my summer project." Harry said smiling up at his owl. "Turned out fairly well I think."

"How did you do it?" Hermione asked leaning forward eager to learn.
"What was it made out of?"

"Basilisk hide, and I'll explain some other time. There is a party to get back to." Harry spun on his heel and walked out of the room leave the others to follow.

The rest of the party went by without much incident. At one point Harry was talking to Gwen and Tonks and they noticed that Ginny and Ron were staring at them intently. It was amazing how star struck those two always got. How Ron reacted to Krum showing up for the tournament came to mind, Harry wondered if he would act the same way this time. Harry shifted to look at Draco, until he noticed and looked back. Then Harry made an eye movement towards the Weasleys. Draco followed the look, noticed the star struck duo and then nodded to Harry before walking off, smiling. Harry never found out what Draco said but the Weasleys stopped watching Harry and Gwen. Years later he would find out that Arthur and Lucius had gotten involved days later and it almost ended in an Honor Duel. Harry never got mentioned as the instigator.

The single most memorable moment for Harry was when it came time to blow out the candles. Remus had assured Harry that he'd been working on the cake for days. Without getting the joke Harry just went for it and blew out the candle. He was expecting a prank but that would involve victimizing him in some way. This was not a prank but it was funny enough to make Harry turn purple for the second time that day.

As soon as the candle was blown out the cake started making a hissing noise. Harry jumped back and a second later there was a small explosion as the front wall of the first floor blew outwards. A tiny replica of Harry came running out cackling madly and was being chased by a walrus, a pig and a proportionately huge flower. The tiny Harry fired some spells over his shoulder and the three pursuers broke and fled back inside, the walrus and pig then tried to hide behind the flower. The tiny Harry bowed to Harry, who was silent with laughter and applauding. The actually edible part of the cake was nothing special.

Presents came around, most of the people got him generic things like candies and Zonko's joke products. The twins also gave him joke products, but these were their own newest creations. Tonks gave him a book on advanced applications of the metamorphmagus abilities. Andy and Ted had arranged for him to get a pair of dragon hide boots, with an automatic sizing charm that could keep up with his shifting. Blaise, Daphne, Hannah and Susan had conspired and managed to gather together a large collection of books by or about the House of Potter, even some that weren't already in the library at the manor. Madam Bones gave him a bracelet that was also an

emergency portkey to the Ministry. Lucius must have known that any gift he gave would be treated with extreme caution, because he gave Harry a sneak-a-scope, and no ideas about why he was smirking. Remus had given him the cake and Sirius told Harry and Tonks that their gifts would arrive tomorrow.

Hermione's present was the surprise of the night though. She was grinning and trying to hold in laughter as he opened the box. "It's a Hair-E!"

Sure enough, the very same wooden 'E' that Harry had given her for Christmas was now wrapped with every color hair he could imagine. He matched her grin. "That's awesome! A little gross maybe, but awesome!"

"Oh, it isn't real hair." Hermione laughed and Tonks joined in, everyone else chuckled politely, keenly aware that they weren't in on the joke. "That'd be nasty."

The party wound down and eventually Harry and Tonks said goodbye to Hermione and only the people who lived in the house were still there. Harry turned away from the fireplace and saw six adults regarding him curiously. "Am I in trouble?"

"No and that's the problem." Sirius answered without inflection.

"Excuse me?" Harry was concerned.

"How did you beat the trace?" Sirius suddenly brightened up. "You cast three spells as soon as you got here and no Ministry owls ever showed up."

"I think you found the spell to remove it early." Andromeda suggested.

"The only other thing we could think of is if you found a way to suppress the signal somehow." Remus added his support to Andromeda's theory. "The spell is probably easier."

"You're right." Harry said happily. "I also removed the trace from every member of my court."

"So, everybody with a mirror?" Sirius clarified.

"That's them, you're not going to tell Mrs. Weasley are you?" Harry worried.

"Merlin NO!" Sirius exclaimed. "She'd be mad enough to kill!"

"She didn't seem so bad today." Gwen interjected.

"That was more to do with being in public, I think." Hestia bit her lip. "Although after she got stunned she acted differently for the rest of the night. I think I heard her mutter about grandchildren right around then too."

"Anyway, it's 11:30. Bedtime you two." Andromeda ordered. "Lots to do tomorrow."

As they were walking up the stairs Tonks leaned into Harry. He pulled her into a one arm hug, and then sighed.

"What?" Tonks asked without turning her head.

"Oh, I've just realized that I went from having no parents to having six." Harry shook his head. "I'm sure I have convinced Sirius that he only needs to be my friend, I can probably get Hestia and Gwen into big sister positions too. I think your parents and Remus will be firmly stuck in parent mode though."

"How bad can it be?" Tonks inquired innocently.

AN:

Dear all of my Non-Mormon readers,

Polygamy was instituted temporarily by Mormons as a way to allow all of their people to move west during a single time in history. The practice has been discontinued. If you want anymore information on the subject ask a Mormon, or don't, it is probably very annoying, they have a true thorough history of themselves that I simply don't possess.

Dear all of my Mormon readers,

Sorry if you were offended, the goal was humor and I knew the history when I wrote it.

-JR

So I heard this joke about a Jew who got lost in the desert...

Also, sorry Christians if my Jesus theories are too much. (if you haven't guessed yet I'm atheist and I think the whole religion thing is a bit silly, but to each his own.)

Also if any of you are named Belinda Plofter, I apologize to you as well.

On to other things,

This chapter is really long, but I just couldn't stop!

Flabbergasted is now a verb, bow to my will English language!

Last week I broke 7k hits in a day. Perhaps today I get 8k? I know that I don't really express appreciation or desire for reviews, and honestly when I started I was planning on ignoring them completely, but I find myself anticipating reviews from some of you. So thanks. :D

I'm also finding that things that I had planned for specific times are moving forward and more things are filling in behind. For instance I was originally planning on Tonks becoming clumsy third year but now I'm pretty sure it is going to happen this coming spring.

Everyone who is waiting impatiently for Harry to get even with Snape, you'll have to wait a while. Earliest that it will be possible will be second half of third year, but it is going to be the worst thing I can possibly imagine doing to cannon Snape.

My story is really solid in my head until after the first task during GoF. I have some decisions to come to for that year (Cedric may or may not be a champion at this point) but I am leaving one decision up to all y'all. Fleur: Good, bad or indifferent? I've put up a poll, so vote if you have an opinion.

"Draco!" Lucius barked as soon as the Malfoy family returned from Grimmauld Place.

"Yes Father?" The twelve year old replied fearfully.

"You should know better than to antagonize a dorm mate." Lucius glared down coolly. "I over heard the youngest weasel boy sewing dissent with the others."

"What was he saying Father?" Draco took a mean expression, he didn't really care what Weasley thought though.

"It doesn't matter. The fact is that he was trying to work against you. There had better be a good reason why." Lucius dictated. "It's bad enough that you had the nerve to get sorted into Gryffindor but then you threaten your own reputation within that house!"

"Don't worry. Weasley is too stupid to effect anything." Draco assured his father. "The worst thing he can do is try to convince them that I'm an evil Slytherin spy, which he's already trying to do. I made sure that his claims would have no merit. One quiet year from me and everyone thinks Weasley is just acting out on his family feud."

"Very well." Lucius nodded. "It would be prudent to accelerate your reputation growth."

"I've been thinking about that. The two most respected students as far as Gryffindors are concerned are the Weasley twins." Draco understood that his father's suggestion was a prompt to hear his plans. "They're noted pranksters, so I figure that that would be my best route. The problem is getting my niche. They work the 'many small effects' angle, there is simply always something happening near them. I can't rip that off of course, so the complete opposite is the rare big events that actually don't do anything, which Harry's claimed."

"Continue." Lucius drawled.

"Should I just proceed through the six W's?"

"It is a good habit."

"Well who is already taken care of obviously. What is their styles, small continuous chaos and huge dramatic effects respectively. Where is obviously Hogwart's. When is inapplicable. How is unknown. As for why, hmm, well the Weasleys are poor, so the twins can probably only get limited amounts of supplies to work with. Most of their works are potions or candies, which implies either an affinity towards brewing or need for it. Potions ingredients are expensive so I doubt they would want to get them all the time, but on the other hand they're incredibly shelf stable so the twins could simply save from times of plenty." Draco rambled brow furrowed.

"Unless they had another source." Lucius liked the moments when he could lead Draco to a conclusion like this, it made Lucius feel like he still had something to teach his son. He knew he had a lot to teach Draco yet but the curriculum changed dramatically last fall. "Something that they're guaranteed to have as long as they're at school."

"Of course! The student supply cabinet." Draco cracked a smile, only for a moment before he schooled his expressions. "So we can assume they have been experimenting with potions using the virtually limitless supplies granted to them. Potions and candies are also easily sell-able, I should suggest that they go into business before they graduate."

"No Draco, even if you like them our families are still feuding." Lucius reprimanded. "You'll be offering them no advice unless it is to try to trick them. What about Potter?"

"He's a mystery. His resources are unknown and appear limitless. It is assumed that he has outside help too. Remember what happened to Teddy Nott? Harry practically told the entire staff that he was behind it and that there was nothing they could say." Draco said awed. "It's like he knows every rule and loophole and at least three ways around each, but he has no interest in pressing his advantage. I don't think I could top him with anything."

"It is unbecoming of our station for you to speak in such a manner about anyone." Lucius scolded.

"Father, you once told me: 'There is no evil, only power and those too weak to seek it.' Do you remember?" Draco calmly asked.

"Yes." Lucius frowned. "What of it?"

"Harry Potter IS power." Draco stressed. "Dumbledore's generation gave us Dumbledore and Grindelwald. Two generations ago we were given The Dark Lord. Last generation we were blessed with your birth. This generation it is Harry. The whole world is either going to work with him or for him."

"Only if you don't take the mantel yourself." Lucius encouraged.

"There is nothing I can do. Harry knows too much and is too strong." Draco said. "Maybe with years of catch up. Right now though I think I should just keep working on taking control of the lions."

"Come to think of it, I have a book that might help you with both of your problems." Lucius walked away and motioned for Draco to follow. "It is in my study. Come Draco, your destiny awaits."

HPCOC

Gwenog Jones was lying in bed next to Sirius, staring at the ceiling, lost deep in thought. Harry's comment about her making captain really had her concerned. He clearly has heard something, and something confirmed at that. Unconfirmed he would have backed out of his statement it would have been an easy 'Oh, I must have heard wrong.' but instead he'd said he wasn't supposed to know.

A sudden noise outside their room shook her out of her thoughts. Her hand immediately reached out and grabbed Sirius' arm, waking him with a start. He opened his eyes and found her sitting stalk straight in bed staring at the door wide eyed. "What's wrong hun?"

"I think there is someone in the house!" She whispered harshly. "And right outside the door."

"Probably just Remus setting up a prank." Sirius moaned and laid back down. "Just be careful if you leave before I do in the morning."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, now come here!" Sirius pulled her down so that she was laying partially on top of him. "You're safe here."

"You're probably right." Gwen said quietly and kissed him gently. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight." Sirius closed his eyes.

"Oh, Sirius?" Gwen whispered.

"Hmm."

"Do you think Harry actually knows anything about the captain selection?" Gwen asked with a yawn.

"Gwen, when I first met Harry after getting out of Azkaban he went less than five minutes before talking about things that I would have sworn he could have only heard from myself or James." Sirius explained. "I still don't know how his people found that information, but it was fairly incontrovertible that they had amazing connections."

"So you think I'll get it?"

"I knew it to be true before Harry said anything." Sirius kissed her. "If anything he is merely a second opinion."

Gwen didn't say anything else, she just hugged him tighter and went to sleep with a smile.

HPCOC

SHIT! Harry swore mentally after just stubbing his toe outside Padfoot's room. It didn't hurt or anything but it made a noise. Naturally Harry immediately heard voices. So much for not waking anyone up. And why do all the spells to let you get around in the dark just make light sources? Seriously not helpful for sneaking. Too dark to use Mage Sight without getting vertigo. I can't even use my natural glow unless I want to dispel the disillusionment.

Harry's horcrux hunt around Grimmauld Place so far had turned up negative. Except for the locket of course, but that was in his pocket now and had stopped triggering the detector. Sirius' room as the last stop before Harry decided that the journal simply wasn't left there by Lucius. With a sigh Harry warped back to his room. He gathered up the case for the detector and conjured a new one, marked 59 and settled the locket down in it.

Harry glanced at his sleeping form in the bed and decided that it would be easiest to just spend the few hours between now and when he wakes up, at the manor. After arriving in his office and sending the artifacts down to storage Harry made his way to the library. After waking up at 8:26 Harry immediately turned himself back to 2:30.

Without Molly Weasley pushing the efforts forward large portions of the house had yet to be cleaned up properly. Everything that registered as dangerous through scanning charms had been identified and removed from all of the rooms, but once that was done auxiliary rooms were abandoned until there was more time and a more helpful elf.

Voldemort had naturally taken precautions against the pieces of his soul being so easily identified. Harry's initial diagnostic scans showed that the locket and the diadem both shared a series of enchantments to make them appear to be benevolent. The only spell that showed them as being dark artifacts was one that only Ministry employees in the appropriate departments were allowed to learn. Fortunately this allowed Harry to have a blind test and verify that his detector worked, even if it was a little more volatile than anticipated.

As Harry walked towards the library his mind drifted back towards that look of Lucius' face. Harry knew that it was too little information to work with but he couldn't stop obsessing over whether or not part of Voldemort's soul was trying to entice, possess and consume one of his friends. That was a pretty sure way to ruin his week.

Now his best plan was to wait in Diagon Alley on the day of Lockhart's book signing and hope Lucius still had it. Failing that he'd either have to find a way to be discreet about scanning with the detector, or he would have to go check Malfoy Manor, which presented problems of its own, namely finding it.

I hope Lucius still plans to plant the diary at Hogwarts and I hope I can find a way to track it down quickly. Harry thought miserably. That's two hopes too many.

Once he arrived at the library he opened the master ledger and started summoning books. He had a lot of shelf space to fill and an

appearance to preserve. He took a wide selection of advanced books on every subject taught at Hogwart's except divination. He doubled up on combat books but by far his largest selection was on healing spells. For Hermione he threw in enough books on magical theory to keep her out of the school library all year. A few research journals in several languages and an Ancient Celtic tome or two, along with what he had received for his birthday and his school books, should have enough variety and volume for no one to notice that Harry will never be reading any of them.

He had a few full notebooks of parselscript work that he didn't need anymore, perhaps he would add those as well. When he had finished making his selections he turned to regard the pile, only to find three elves quietly packaging and shrinking the books as they arrived. He really loved the elves' ability to anticipate their master's needs.

HPCOC

Albus Dumbledore watched out the window from his office as the sun started to rise. This would undoubtedly be the most important dawn of Albus' year. He turned and walked to a cabinet when he heard a knock on the door. "Come in Sybil."

"Albus, you know it is unwise to disturb a seer at dawn." Trelawney whispered as she entered the room. "It is the time when the mists of time are the clearest, stress could damage my third eye."

"I know the dangers." Albus said sadly as he turned towards her, now holding a cup of steaming potion.

"Albus no!" Sybil cried. "Just be patient and let the future reveal itself!"

"I'm sorry Sybil." Dumbledore sighed. "He was almost killed four times this year, the dark forces are clearly on the move. How am I supposed to make sure he fulfills his destiny if I can't protect him?"

"But it hurts!" Sybil whined.

"Neither can live while the other survives' Sybil, you said that." Dumbledore insisted. "If Harry dies Voldemort will live forever!"

"There has to be another way." Tears ran down Trelawney's face.

"I cannot prepare for things I don't know are threats. Harry's life, and by extension the rest of the world's, might hang on this." The sound of disappointment from a respected elder was always a good motivator, at least in Dumbledore's experience. "But if you're adamant I won't force you."

"I-" Trelawney's breath caught in her throat, she swallowed quickly.
"I'll do it."

Albus triumphed internally, congratulating himself once again for finding the spell to change one word in that prophecy. 'Neither can lives while the other survives' is much more ambiguous than 'Neither can die while the other survives', his version allowed him to use any means to protect Harry, even when that meant imprisoning him. The original version just leaves it obvious that to finish Voldemort's life for good Harry would have to die in the same moment. If they didn't die simultaneously they would just keep getting up, over and over again.

He watched as a terrified seer drank the ancient potion used by the Romans to force their oracles to predict. It had some draw backs, the important one being that it could only be used at dawn the day after the target's day of birth. It also had a tendency to kill seers who used it too often and caused them incredible amounts of pain, but that was neither here nor there. After thirty seconds Albus could tell the potion was taking effect and he leaned forward eagerly. "Now then, tell me about Harry."

Sybil stopped breathing and didn't inhale for nearly two minutes. Suddenly her eyes rolled into the back of her head and her back arched. Her voice, that was normally airy and alien during prophecy, was now deep and gravelly.

"When the third Lord joins the living

They will war

For only one can rule

So two must fall

Chaos without Law

Will fall to Entropy

The Ancient Fisherman

Will tangle his lines

If he casts too many nets

And Death will stalk

That which is denied him

Between the King and his Court

The decision is made

But only the One

Will the boy support

And the Children of Change

Shall make it so"

"ELF!" Albus beckoned as Sybil collapsed, falling out of her chair and onto the floor. Luckily for Dumbledore she was already unconscious when she started and wouldn't remember a thing.

"Yes Master Dumblydoor?" The elf bowed.

"Clean up this mess would you?" Dumbledore waved off-handedly at Trelawney's crumpled form. He turned his back and made his way into his personal quarters already lost in thought.

HPCOC

Tonks hadn't woken Harry up in almost two months, again, and she wasn't going to waste this chance either. She was determined to make Harry her boyfriend before she turned thirteen, but she had to be careful not to hurt Hermione in the process. The girls had been drawn to Harry for different reasons and were very open with each

other about how they felt for him. That gave them the shared interest necessary to bond and now they were as close to sisters and two unrelated girls could be. Their competition for Harry would be a slow honorable one, no rumor mongering or back stabbing, in fact Tonks felt she would rather cut off her own foot than betray the other girl.

Her plan was unfortunately limited to continuing on the same path. She'd hoped that he would eventually get accustomed to her waking him up, and then miss it when she couldn't. Living with Harry would give her a couple hours at each end of the day where Hermione wouldn't be there. Tonks knew she wouldn't be able to take full advantage of this situation without feeling guilty, so she wasn't going to try anything during those times. That didn't, however, mean that she couldn't react to Harry's actions.

She quietly slipped into his room, drapes still blocking out all the light except for right near the bookshelves. Had she been less focused on not making a noise she would have noticed the piles of books on the floor, but she didn't. If she had noticed the piles of books she would have also noticed Harry sitting in the midst of them watching her cross the room. Instead she reached his bed and energetically threw the curtains open. "HARRY!...Harry?"

"Good morning Nym." Harry used a ventriloquism spell to whisper directly into her ear. She screamed and did a spinning jump that would have been ballet if it had been coordinated. Only then did she see Harry, now laughing, amongst the books.

"Yea yea, laugh it up buster." Tonks smiled, shaking her head and started to walk towards him.

"STOP!" Harry shouted before she moved her foot, and then he climbed to his feet. "Stay right there."

"Um, okay." The confusion was evident in her voice as he walked across the room. "What's going on?"

"Nym, there is something I have wanted to tell you since Christmas and it's kind of hard to say." Harry said quietly when he was standing right in front of her. "But first I need you to commit to memory exactly what you're feeling right now."

HOLY CRAP! Is this what I think it is? Tonks was going insane in her own mind, but she definitely wouldn't be forgetting anything about this, ever. "Okay, done."

"I would have brought this up a long time ago, but I wanted to be certain I had the right girl first." Harry fidgeted unconsciously. "I hope you don't hate me for how long I've taken."

"Harry, I could never hate you." It is what I think, Harry Potter is about to ask me out!

"Well, I heard this prophecy, and I think it is about you." Harry looked down, expecting anger.

"Oh." Oh.

"From how I've interpreted it, it's worthless. It could mean anything from the two of us setting the all time record for N.E.W.T.s to the far other extreme where I convert to Buddhism, and win at it, then get assassinated by the twins, after which I then possess you, become the next dark lord and rule forever." Harry summed up. "Beyond being so extremely open to interpretation it doesn't present us with any options, simply this will happen, makes it pointless to know because you can't change anything. I think it is only there to identify us."

"Well, let me hear it then." Tonks said trying to keep the crushed hopes and dreams out of her voice.

"Together born shall be The Children of Change , The world that was once will never be , Destroyed by the Forge, The Boy of Change , For many years The Girl he won't see , The One was loved by all , The other was cast out , Together they'll join in fall , The change was swift , With his final form the Enlightenment, He shall teach her , Together they shall go forth , Heroes to the world , All will bow to them , Together they will be , With Time." Harry recited, looking at the ceiling to assist his memory. She doesn't need to know about those two missing lines yet.

"I like how it ends." Tonks' eyes then opened wide. Shit! Did I just say that out loud.

"Me too." Harry agreed smiling, making Tonks blush.

"I don't want to not see you for years though." Tonks wrung her hands.

"We went eleven years between when we were in the same room and meeting at the opening feast. I think that is the 'many years'." Or the fifty some that I experienced after you died.

"Who else knows?" Tonks hoped that he didn't say Hermione.

"Just the two of us as far as I can tell." Harry said, then frowned. "Unless someone heard it while it was being given."

"Then I say we forget about it." Tonks shrugged and smiled. "Like you said, it doesn't sound like there's anything we can do, so it's best left ignored. So why did you have me remember that feeling, does it have something to do with the prophecy?"

Harry's smile grew passed the limits of his face, only possible because of being a metamorph. "Look at your feet."

Tonks looked down and screamed happily at seeing the air between her feet and the floor. After dropping an inch so that her feet were back on the floor she jumped forward and threw her arms around Harry.

AN:

Super fast update! I'm amazed I had more to write so soon (and I know it's short but that felt like too good of an end point).

Hedwig is not going to be a warrior, ever. The closest she might come is swooping down and catching Wormtail if I let him out of prison. Mail owls logically are bred and traileld to be docile and people friendly. It'd be like turning house elves into corporate executives.

My spell checker tried to replace 'N.E.W.T.s' with outspoken. Computers are strange things some times.

"We should tell Hermione everything." Tonks said excitedly as she pulled out of the hug.

Harry regarded the happy young witch silently for a moment, while she bounced energetically on the balls of her feet. "I was going to say just that."

"I'll call her over!" Tonks spun and ran out of the room. She finished her sprint by diving over the foot board onto her bed. After scrambling the rest of the way to her night stand she propped herself up on her elbows and flipped open her mirror. "Hermione!"

A few moments later the mirror faded to a different view and Hermione's face had replaced Tonks' "Oh, good morning Tonks."

"Hermione you gotta get your little tushy over here pronto!" Tonks squealed. "Something amazing just happened."

"Oh." Hermione's face dropped. "I see."

"Oh, no!" Tonks stopped her. "It's not that, you're still in the running. You really just have to come see for yourself."

"Alright, I'll be over as soon as I can." Hermione agreed.

"We'll be in Harry's room." Tonks beamed.

"Okay, I'll see you then."

"Bye." Tonks closed her mirror, cutting off the connection, and ran back to Harry's room. "How do I get better?"

"I really don't know." Harry shrugged. "I don't know if it can be taught. I learned on my own."

"Well we can try." Tonks insisted.

"We can, the first step should be to review the memory and try to recapture the feeling. See where that gets you." Harry suggested and then waved to all the books on the floor. "Should be similar to occlumency, but different. While you're doing that I'm going to keep sorting these."

HPCOC

Albus Dumbledore sat on his recliner in his private room. He discovered them when he left Harry at the Dursley residence. He had to go inside to ensure that they would hate the boy after all. In the living room he had spotted the masterpiece of sitting comfort, and promptly stole it, replaced it with an inferior substitute and obliterated the Dursleys of the chair's existence.

This wasn't that chair, that chair had died a glorious death of discovery as Albus tore it apart to see how it was built. Albus built his own recliner and enchanted it for comfort. He was currently lying back getting a massage and contemplating the new prophecy.

Let's see. He thought holding up the transcript he had had a Quick-Quotes Quill taking. The first four lines really couldn't be much clearer. Hmm. 'Chaos without law will fall to entropy' well, the Children of Change have always been agents of chaos, so this is probably one of the two of them, or both. So what force is 'law'?

I have know idea who she could have meant by 'Ancient Fisherman'. Perhaps the founder of Harry's organization. I'll need to look into that, see if I can't get Harry or Nick to tell me the history. Without knowing who that references for sure I can't do anything about it.

'And death will stalk that which is denied him' this is undoubtedly Voldemort. Sounds like a done deal for him though.

'Between the King and his court the decision is made' So this king is going to decide which lord wins. Kings rule in castles and his court does his bidding. I rule Hogwart's and the staff does my bidding. I'm going to go forward as though I am the king and simply keep my eyes open for others who might qualify.

'But only the one will the boy support and the Children of Change will make it so' So, Harry's loyalty will be to himself and or Nymphadora, Voldemort or this Fisherman, but I'll choose who.

Priorities then: First, figure out who the fisherman is. Second, figure out who or what 'law' is. Third, make sure I gain control of both of these characters. Fourth, figure out whether Harry is better or worse than the fisherman and decide who will win. Fifth convince Harry to support the fisherman, should I find the fisherman suitable.

Albus stood up and walked out into his office. Taking his pensieve out of its hiding place and stirring with his wand he brought up his memory of dawn twelve years ago to the day. The morning after Harry's birth. Lowering himself he gently drifted into that morning.

Albus' office reformed out of the mist and with a quick glance around he oriented himself. A younger Trelawney was begging at Albus' feet. It was rather pathetic, in Albus' opinion. The memory Albus held a goblet of the same steaming potion that real Albus had Trelawney drink that morning.

"I can't force you Sybil." Dream Albus said compassionately, years later this scene would become one of Albus' favorites, he impressed himself every time. "But the future of the world could depend on it."

"You said that about the Longbottom boy yesterday." Sybil cried. "I can't, please. Two days in a row could kill me."

"The Dark Lord could kill the one who can save us all." Dumbledore insisted, smiling sadly. The real Albus noticed his legilimency pressing the idea into her mind, he always hoped he was subtler now. "We need to know who to protect."

"I-I'll do it." Trelawney sobbed. With a face full of apprehension she drank the potion. Her back bent so far it almost broke and her voice was more inhuman then ever. She was truly a horrifying sight as blood started running from her nose, eyes and ears.

"Together born shall be The Children of Change." The dream Trelawney pitched forward and vomited blood all over Albus and the desk. Those robes were never the same. Real Albus thought as he studied her mouth while she vomited. Albus knew that the Oracle Potion didn't allow for pause and her mouth still looked like she was talking. He concluded that there were missing lines.

"The world that was once will never be. Destroyed by the Forge, The Boy of Change For many years The Girl he won't see" More vomit therefore more missing lines. "The One was loved by all, The other was cast out, Together they'll join in fall. The Boy knows what's to come, With knowledge unknown, The change was swift" This was the long break that made Albus regret giving her the potion twice.

Three or four lines could have easily fit in the gap. "With his final
form the Enlightenment

He shall teach her Together they shall go forth Heroes to the world
All will bow to them Together they will be With Time."

Trelawney collapsed at this point and just like this morning memory Albus summoned an elf to deal with her. She didn't wake up for three months and wouldn't let anyone approach her with liquid of any type for a year after that. That set of robes was incinerated a few months later after the house elves reported failing to remove the blood. That's the real shame, I loved those robes.

As real Albus landed back in his office he recalled modifying the prophecy orb to remove the pauses. His thoughts at the time were that it isn't what you didn't know that got you, but what you didn't know you didn't know. He still supported his decision to deny anyone who comes to that prophecy the knowledge that some of it was missing. Misinformation is just as important in war as warriors are.

Albus returned to his recliner to ponder and decide if and what he would change in the recording of this newest prophecy.

HPCOC

Sirius was just finishing up wrapping his presents to the kids when the fireplace flashed green and Hermione stumbled through. She waved as she hurried through the room to get to the stairs. "Hi Hermione. Hey inform those miscreants that breakfast is in twenty."

"Hey Padfoot, I'll let them know." Hermione smiled and continued up the stairs. She finished her run by bursting into Harry's room, where Tonks was sitting cross legged on the floor and Harry was with his books. "Ooo, books!"

"If you help me sort them you can borrow some." Harry smiled across the room. She ran over excitedly. "We're going by author, by subject. I don't know whether I want to split them in half and have a section for theory and a section for practical, or just have them all together."

She sat down next to him and hugged him tightly before picking up a book. "Tonks said there was big news?"

"Yea, but it isn't time sensitive and I'd rather wait for her to come back to us before we talk." Harry shrugged. "But it is certainly HOPS level."

"Does the news have to do with her occlumency?" Hermione clearly recognized Tonks' pose. "Have you check her shields yet? Will you check mine? I was going to ask on the train ride home but I wanted to tear them down and rebuild one last time. Then I did it again during July while I was waiting for you to come back."

"Just how many times have you rebuilt them?" Harry's attention was now solely on her.

"Well, once you woke up and scolded us I ripped down what I had and started over." Hermione looked up biting her lip. "And then again at the beginning of June, which I was expecting. Again the night we got home and then again in the first week of July. Is that bad?"

"No, quite impressive actually. Most people take around a month to recover from rebuilding their shields." Harry struggled to find an analogy. "It's like...oh...say you ran a marathon, then realized you forgot something at the start line, so you turned around and ran back, and then turned around again and crossed the finish line again, just because. If they're any good no one will believe you if and when you tell them."

"So are they any good? I've been working really hard." Hermione leaned forward and looked him deep in the eye.

"Alright, alright, here I go." Harry sent a gentle legilimency probe. He suddenly found himself standing in Hermione's mind scape looking at a giant egg shaped metal capsule. He moved up to it and examined it in close detail and he circled. Finding no flaws he drew back his arm and struck it. There was no give at all. He was grinning when he returned to the real world. "Hermione, you're amazing!"

"I know." She said blushing proudly. "But you should probably tell me why. You know, so I can make sure you're worshiping the proper aspects of my greatness."

Harry just looked at her for a few seconds before they both burst into laughter. After Harry managed to catch his breath he smiled at her. "If you know the fable of the three little pigs and the big bad wolf, you'll know the straw house, the wood house and the brick house, yes?"

"Yes, what about them?" Hermione raised an eyebrow

"Well, for as long as you've been practicing you should still be at the straw house equivalent. Perhaps starting to progress to the next stage." Harry put a hand on Hermione's. "You however are passed the brick house stage. You seem to be a natural."

"Really?" Hermione asked happily. "I've been thinking about adding animals around the outside to help defend but the books suggests that I avoid animated guardians."

"Go for it." Harry encouraged. "Worst thing that can happen is that you have to take them out again. As you are now you will be able to keep anyone out long enough to take counter measures. Don't let up though, there are always things that can be improved, no matter how good your shields are."

"Oh, are you checking occlumency?" Tonks piped up from the other side of the room.

"Yea and he said I'm a natural!" Hermione gloated.

"Check mine Harry!" Tonks commanded and strolled over.

"Did you find the feeling?" Harry asked as she sat down next to Hermione.

"I think so." Tonks nodded happily and then switched to a Transylvanian accent. "Now, look into my eyes."

"Okay, Vlad." Harry chuckled and leaned forward.

Tonks found herself suddenly lost in his beautiful green eyes. Suddenly she found herself remembering how dashing he looked while he was fighting the troll. Her stomach sank as she witness him get hit. Suddenly she was watching him fight the basilisk again.

That's when she realized her shields hadn't kept him out. "Oh, shoot."

"Well, you have a decent foundation." Harry stated rubbing the back of his neck. "The structure could use some work though."

"Oh just say it was terrible and get it over with." Tonks sounded upset.

"You're not doing bad at all." Harry reassured. "You're slightly ahead of what would normally be expected."

"I guess I can settle on second best." Tonks said glumly.

"Hey! I can't shape shift!" Hermione defended. "I would consider myself second best between the two of us."

"Stop it both of you." Harry scolded. "You're both amazing and I wouldn't want to lose either of you. There is no second best."

"Sorry Harry." The girls said together.

"It's okay." Harry drew his wand and cast privacy charms around the room. "Now there is a reason you called Hermione over isn't there?"

"Yes of course." Tonks started to inhale to start her story when Hermione interrupted.

"Padfoot asked me to tell you that there was only twenty minutes before breakfast, and that was like ten minutes ago, so if this is going to take a while maybe we should wait." Hermione suggested helpfully.

"We can use my pensieve, it'd be the quickest way." Harry added.

"Sounds like a plan." Tonks replied and Harry got up and retrieved the pensieve from his trunk. "This way she can hear the prophecy too."

"Prophecy?" Hermione raised an eyebrow.

"You'll see." Harry said lamely as he returned. "We don't think it is worth much, and better kept under wraps. Dumbledore doesn't know

that I know anything about any prophecies and I would like to keep it that way."

"Right, so mums the word." Hermione made the lips sealed motion.

"Actually everything about this memory is to be kept secret for now." Tonks said. "Right Harry? The less anyone else knows the more advantaged we are?"

"It isn't universal, but that is a good rule." Harry drew a silvery strand of memory out and put it in his pensieve. "We shouldn't even tell the adults here. We can trust them and everything but there is no need to tell them and open the door for more leaks."

"Is it really that big of a deal?" Hermione asked concerned.

"Until it happened I thought this was only possible for Harry." Tonks nodded. "And even then, that's only because I witnessed it. If someone had merely told me I would call them a liar."

"All set." Harry looked up at Hermione. "Only two people can use this at once, so you can go alone or pick one of us to go with you."

"I'll go alone." Hermione said bravely and entered the pensieve.

"So what do we do while we wait?" Tonks wagged her eyebrows.

Harry smirked. "Let's see if we can get you off the ground again."

"It's not working." Tonks cried frustrated, five minutes later.

"It's okay Nym. Keep trying." Harry empathized. "I took me years to learn."

"YOU CAN FLY!" Hermione screamed smiling as she returned from the memories. "BOTH OF YOU?"

"Me practically, her potentially." Harry summed up. "But try not to shout about it when we leave the silencing charms."

"This...This is amazing." Hermione started. "I did the research when I was trying to find a way to get out of flying class. Flight without a

device was mentioned briefly. The book said it was just a fairy tale. It's supposed to be impossible."

"Just like surviving a killing curse?" Harry's eyebrow skyrocketed.

"Alright, so I shouldn't really say the word impossible around you, unless I'm describing you." Hermione rolled her eyes. "But still, you shouldn't keep this a secret."

"You heard the prophecy?" Harry paused to wait for Hermione to nod. "Well there is another one saying that I have to keep fighting Voldemort until one of us is dead for good. I'm keeping any advantage I can find against him and the secret ability to fly is one of those."

"So you're not going to solve one of the great magical mysteries?" Hermione asked disappointedly.

"Maybe after everything is over, when I can live a life of peace." Harry tilted his head like he was looking off into the distance.

"So, lemme see Nym!" Hermione bounced.

"Well, I can't really get it to happen again." Tonks screwed up her face in concentration.

"Oh, well maybe someday." Hermione was confident, even if Tonks wasn't. "None of us learned to walk in a day."

"Well actually-

"Shut up Harry, you don't count." Hermione waved his comment off casually.

"Aww." Harry visibly deflated, but was prevented from commenting when a knock came from the door. Harry jumped up and ran over to answer. "Oh, hey Hestia, what's up?"

"Breakfast, come on." Hestia motioned with her head. "What were you doing so quietly?"

"Just teasing Harry." Tonks piped up.

"Oh, well I hope you weren't being too mean."

"Not at all." Tonks said innocently.

"Morning pups!" Sirius greeted as the three kids and Hestia entered the dining room.

"I'm glad you came early Hermione." Gwen smiled. "Shopping after breakfast and I wouldn't want to be slowed down by waiting for you to get here."

"Shopping?" Harry's voice was full of dread.

"Shopping!" Hestia exclaimed. "With me and my sister you're sure to be set for all occasions."

"I guess I should have been clearer. Shopping for what?"

"Clothes of course." Gwen said beaming.

"PADFOOT!" Harry whined. "Don't you love me?"

"Oh, it won't be that bad." Hestia scoffed as everyone else laughed. "Only has to happen once a summer."

"I think you'll find a distraction waiting on your place setting though if you would ever make your way over there." Sirius said pointedly, while also pointing at Harry's seat.

Harry, grumbling, lead the other two twelve year olds over to their part of the table. Each of their plates had a small rectangular, wrapped, package. Each marked with their name and birthday wishes and signed by Sirius. Harry and Tonks shrugged and started opening them with a quick thanks to Sirius. Hermione however didn't. "Padfoot, my birthday isn't for almost two months."

"I know Hermione, but with those two getting theirs' today I thought you would want yours too." Sirius smiled. "I just won't give you anything in September."

"I guess that's fair." Hermione ripped open her package quickly, so as to catch up with the other two. As the paper fell away she found herself looking at a photo of a large golden eagle. After the rest of

the paper was gone she could see that it was a book on non-magical birds of the world. Hermione looked over to the other two, Tonks was holding a similar book on mammals and Harry's was on reptiles and amphibians. After looking at each other all three looked to Sirius, confused.

"How would you three like to become animagi?" Sirius asked, laughing at their confusion.

"Really, that'd be awesome!" Tonks clapped.

"Doesn't it take years?" Hermione was determined but cautious. "Professor McGonagall told us that it was a very advanced transformation that we won't get around to studying until sixth year."

"Yes, well there is McGonagall's way." Sirius grinned. "And then there is the Marauder's way."

"What's the difference?" Hermione was intrigued.

"Well, ours is even more illegal than teaching minors would be normally." Sirius started offhandedly while Remus chuckled. "Second you can chose what you want to become. Third it is all done through a potion. Fourth, if everything goes well this can be accomplished before Hermione turns fourteen. Fifth...What was fifth again Moony?"

"Uh, I think that's it. Oh wait, Fifth outsiders can interfere with the process." Remus supplied.

"And sixth, don't chose your animal on a bet." Sirius finished laughing. "James and the rat bet each other that they would finish their potion on the second try. They're stakes were to choose the other's and they both lost. James made the rat and the rat thought it would be funny to make James a stag, especially since we were going to be trying to subdue a wolf."

"If you had been in on that bet it would have totally defeated the purpose, James wanted to turn you into a tom cat and set you on McGonagall." Remus laughed. "If that had happened none of you would have been much help on the full moons."

"So what do we need to do before next summer?" Harry hoped to cut off the old war stories before they started.

"First you need to decide whether you want to go through with this, second you need to pick your animal. The first stage of the potion needs to be done on the winter solstice and the second part on the summer solstice. During the second part you'll need to add a tissue sample from the target animal." Remus listed. "There has never been anyone known to successfully use a magical animal, so don't bother unless you want to waste a year."

"Professor McGonagall says that not everyone has the potential to complete the transformation." Hermione said setting her book in her lap. "Does that hold true?"

"Yes, absolutely." Sirius poured himself a glass of juice. "Why do you think we found the potion in the first place? None of us had the potential for the traditional method."

"Do you have any idea how being a metamorph will change things?" Harry murmured.

"Either it won't." Remus said calmly. "Or you'll be able to morph your animal form, there is nothing to indicate that it would cause the potion to fail."

"Oh." Harry started to thumb through the book looking at the animals.

"Hey, no reading at the meal table." Tonks scolded.

"I'll let you go with a warning this time." Andromeda said diplomatically. "But put it away."

Harry closed his book and turned to breakfast. After breakfast the kids were given just enough time to take their books upstairs before they were rushed off to Diagon Alley by the Jones sisters. They were out until dinner, when Hermione had to go home, and were too exhausted by the end of the day to think, much less try to get Tonks flying again. Gwen and Hestia were both silently congratulating themselves on a successful outing that night while they drifted off to sleep.

AN:

Alright, first of all I would like to say that if I don't explain something immediately I intend for it to be a mystery for a while. I had a review asking if the reviewer was correct in assuming Lucius gave the diary to Draco. Wait and see. Unlike JK who introduced things the year she was going to use them (portkeys, foreign schools, veela, etc) I am already setting things up for GoF and beyond, so you're going to have to deal with long waits on some things.

Second, if you have a question about how something works or why something happened and it isn't a plot device I may explain it. If I don't you'll see eventually, if I do, I reserve the right to have a better idea before publishing time. Nothing I write in my notes or in replies to reviews is going to bind me to anything specific. I actually changed my mind about specifically how I wanted Tonks' flight to function in just this manner.

Third, yes I planned on the whole prophecy not being there, yes I know what's missing, yes I'm a jerk. I don't know when you'll know what's missing, I don't even have any ideas of how to introduce it. It probably won't happen any earlier than fifth year though.

Fourth, animagi: I don't see being able to turn into a panther, for instance, to be a very useful thing for a wizard to do. It is only best suited for combat, but if I wanted a panther, or any other animal, in combat I would just conjure one. None of these three are going to be combat-y in their animal forms, you could make an argument for Harry's but that is merely because it is dangerous. Yes all three are already chosen.

Finally, this chapter takes this story over the 100k words mark! Woot!

Hermione jumped out of her seat when the owls arrived from Hogwarts. Her excitement was barely contained as she squealed when she found her letter and ripped it open enthusiastically before sitting back down. "HERMIONE!"

"What?" Hermione asked without looking up.

"What did I just tell Harry?" Andromeda asked irritated.

"Um.." Hermione glanced at the boy and saw the reptile book still in his hands. "..Right, sorry."

"So what did you manage to see before she stopped you?" Tonks asked mischievously.

"Oh, honestly." Andromeda sighed, throwing her hands up.

"Not much." Hermione giggled looking at Harry. "Loads of books by Lockhart though."

"Figures." Harry muttered darkly.

"What's so special about Lockhart books?" Andromeda raised an eyebrow.

"Nothing, if you enjoy fiction." Harry scoffed.

"Gilderoy Lockhart does not write fiction!" Andromeda defended hotly.

"He says that Lockhart is a fraud mum." Tonks said grinning at the look on her mother's face.

"Why would you say that?" Andromeda demanded, turning to the boy.

"Have you read his books?" Harry asked sarcastically. "More importantly have you ever heard about any of his alleged accomplishments anywhere other than in his books?"

"What do you mean?" Gwen asked confused.

"Well, how many people have written about Dumbledore's defeat of Grindelwald? Lots. How many people have written about Voldemort's rise to power?" Harry rolled his eyes as some of the adults flinched. "Fewer but still some. Now how many people have written about Lockhart fighting vampires? Only Lockhart. If he actually did anything he says he did then more people than just him would be saying he did it."

"A lot of people believe Lockhart. It isn't just him saying it." Andromeda countered.

"But the only reason those people are backing his claims is because he wrote about them." Harry calmly assured her. "I could write a book claiming that I can apparate to the sun and detailing what I found when I arrived and if I were to sell it to enough people eventually someone would believe it. Once there is one other person who believes me than I'm not the only person who says I've been there. It doesn't however mean that I have."

"So you think it is more likely that he simply tricked the whole population?" Hestia asked skeptically.

"Peter Pettigrew did." Harry said coldly.

"You have a point." Hestia admitted glumly while Gwen gave Sirius a one armed hug.

"But we're still going to his book signing next week." Andromeda asserted making Harry groan, and the rest of them laugh.

HPCOC

A couple hours later Gwenog slipped into the room her sister shared with Remus. "Hestia! Get your camera!"

"What is it?" Hestia asked as she walked over to her bedside table and opened a drawer.

"It's the kids." Gwen swooned. "They're so cute."

"Got it. Lead the way." Hestia grinned and followed Gwen out the door and down the hall to Harry's room.

His door was open and none of the children noticed the two sisters looking in. Hestia had to suppress the urge to coo when she saw them. Harry was sitting up against his head board with his knees up and his reptile book propped up by them. Hermione and Tonks were sitting on either side leaning against Harry, each had their head resting on Harry's shoulder and were immersed in their own books.

Hestia silently raised her camera to her eye and took aim. The flash of light and sound of flash powder igniting caught the children's attention and all three looked up with identical expressions of surprise. A moment later they jumped apart, blushing. Hestia laughed. "Sorry kids, too late for that. We've got photographic evidence.

"How much do you think Teen Witch Weekly will pay for a copy of that print?" Gwen taunted.

"You laugh now." Harry scorned. "But don't forget Gwen, you're just as famous as I am and I can get a camera too."

"Right then." Gwen stammered nervously. "No one outside this house will see that, I guess."

"Not that I would mind if you had taken the picture at, say, a park." Harry amended. "But what happens in one's home shouldn't be published."

"So how 'bout we go to a park or something and try again?" Hestia joked, making the kids blush again.

"Did you need anything or are you just up here to harass us?" Harry asked pointedly.

"Oh, we're just here to harass you." Hestia grinned.

"Mission accomplished I think." Gwen added nodding.

"Then you can leave now?" Tonks demanded tactlessly.

"I guess so..." Hestia trailed off. "But that's not as much fun."

"Good." Hermione said as Harry hopped off the bed and shooed the sisters away. He closed the door and locked it before climbing back onto the bed.

As Harry retook his position and picked his book back up, Hermione moved back into her place and Tonks pulled one of the curtains closed, obscuring them from the door. "Hey Harry?"

"Yes Nym?"

"Why did you pick royal blue and bronze for Hedwig's cape if it wasn't supposed to be Ravenclaw colors?" Tonks queried as she snuggled back into Harry's shoulder.

"Well, that goes back to the symbolism of the colors. Lady Ravenclaw was descended from royalty on both sides of the Roman invasion. Bronze was the metal of kings before iron working made its way here and during the medieval times royal blue was picked up to signify royalty. The Potter Family is also descended from the medieval royalty, thus the blue, and the other color isn't technically bronze, it's a dark copper tone and is a fairly close match to my natural skin tone." Harry lectured quietly.

"Oh." Tonks said thoughtfully.

"What about the other house colors?" Hermione asked pulling away from him slightly so she could look at him.

"Lord Gryffindor came from Roman nobility. Scarlet and gold were common colors for them and lions were common symbols. He was the second highest ranking member of the founding four, next to Rowena." Harry explained. "And Salazar Slytherin made his fortune in the potions ingredient trade. Silver is the traditional color of merchants and traders, and green implies plants which with magic imply ingredients. He could have peddled in anything though. The snake being the house animal is correctly inferred to be a reference to parslemagic."

Hermione was nodding enthusiastically at this point. "And Hufflepuff?"

"Oh, right." Harry chuckled. "The Hufflepuffs were bee keepers."

"Oh." Hermione sounded let down.

"That really explains a lot though." Tonks added pensively. "Have you ever noticed how much honey is in the Great Hall at meal times?"*

"Yea, now that you mention it I have." Hermione nodded conspiratorially.

"Well, mystery solved." Harry smiled.

"There is still something I would like to know though." Tonks said looking up at him.

"What's that?" Harry asked looking down, faces merely inches apart.

"When are you going to put my door sign back to normal?" Tonks blushed. "It was cute at first but a couple days of seeing 'Nymmy' there wore off the charm quickly."

"Yea, I was going to do that tonight anyway." Harry answered merrily. "Once we're done reading and stuff I'll take care of it."

"Good." Tonks nodded and turned back to her book.

HPCOC

August twelfth arrived quickly and Harry woke suddenly as his mattress suddenly decided to jump several feet to the side. The bed frame didn't move with it and so a few moments later it dropped to the floor, passenger in tow. A dazed Harry extricated himself from his now tossed and tangled bedding and glared at the three laughing adult males. Harry groaned and rubbed his eyes. "I expected this of Moony and Padfoot, but et tu Ted?"

A shrill shriek of surprise came from across the halls, implying that the females in the house had given Tonks the same treatment. The adults' laughter got louder for a few moments before Ted was able to restrain himself. "Sorry Harry, I fear they've been a bad influence on me."

"Morning Pup." Sirius gasped wiping a tear from his eye.

"I think I should start wearing my wand holster at night too." Harry muttered as he walked over to his bedside table and drew his wand. Without turning he quickly cast three charms over his shoulder before securing the holster to his arm. He turned to review his work and was pleased to see that Ted now had broccoli growing out of his ears, Sirius' nose was upside down and Remus' hair was growing rapidly. Harry nodded satisfactorily. "Well, it was short notice but it'll do."

Harry was still half asleep as he shoved passed them and made his way to Tonks' room. It was only the Jones sisters in there with their backs to the door. Tonks was still sitting on the floor glaring but didn't fail to see Harry wink at her. Harry figured he would make the couples match and quickly cast the spells.

When Tonks suddenly stopped glaring and started giggling the sisters knew something was wrong and turned to each other. Harry decided that he would have to ask if they were fraternal twins after seeing how they reacted. As one they both gasped in horror, and then pointed at the other and started laughing. Hestia's hair was now receding at a rate equal to Remus' growing and Gwen's entire face, except her nose, had been rotated so her eyes were on her chin and her mouth on her forehead.

"Watch out ladies!" Remus shouted from the other room, you could tell they were laughing again and were having a hard time talking. "Harry's coming and he's got vengeance on his side!"

"We know!" Hestia shouted back between laughs. "What'd he get you with?"

"Just meet us in the hall and see!" Sirius called.

As the women walked out into the hall Harry flopped down on the mattress with Tonks, who promptly moved and rested her head on his stomach. "Morning Nym."

"Morning Harry."

"That was annoying."

"Yup." Tonks nodded, which was a little weird with her position. "It's not even like it was a clever or particularly funny gag either."

"I'd put money on it that I could do a better bed based wake up prank." Harry complained.

"Do it." Tonks encouraged. "Between you me and Hermione we can give the old folk a run for their money."

"I wonder how big Hande can get. How do you think Padfoot would like waking up while being eaten by an anaconda?" Harry chuckled maniacally.

"Make sure you have a camera ready." Tonks giggled. "And make sure she doesn't actually eat him, of course."

"BREAKFAST!" Andromeda shouted from downstairs while ringing a bell. "PACK IN THE PRANKS AND GET DOWN HERE!"

"COMING." Tonks called back and climbed to her feet before pulling Harry up too.

"I don't know, I think I'll keep it short." Hestia's voice carried out of the kitchen as the kids approached. As they walked through the door they saw Hestia facing Andromeda and Gwen while examining her hair in a mirror. She looked up when they walked in and smiled. "Hey Harry, can you just halt this now instead of just reversing it?"

"Well, I was going to wait until you were completely bald, but if you insist." Harry waved his wand and her hair stopped disappearing. He reversed the charm on Gwen's face as well. When she looked at him for an explanation he just shrugged. "I figured it would be really hard to eat like that."

"WHAT?" Ted asked excessively loudly as he walked in from the other room.

"Honey, you look absurd." Andromeda chuckled. "Harry I hope everyone is going to be back to how they were before we leave."

"Except me!" Hestia added. She was opening her mouth to say more when the door opened again and Remus sauntered in arrogantly, hair now down to mid back.

"I'm ready for the photographer." He said saucily and dramatically flipped his hair over his shoulder. Sirius followed him without comment, with a tiny top hat sitting on the top of his nose.

Throughout breakfast Sirius steadfastly refused to acknowledge the existence of his top hat and Remus' hair continued to grow and was now pooled on the floor around his chair. After five minutes or so of having conversation at half shout for the benefit of Ted, Harry got tired of it and got rid of the broccoli.

Just as breakfast was winding down a chime came from the parlor indicating arrival via floo. Tonks jumped up and ran out of the dining room and came back shortly with Hermione following. Hermione took one look at Remus and smiled. "I like what you've done with your hair Moony."

"Oh, thanks." Remus smiled genially and ran his hand through his hair appreciatively. "It's all the rage in Prague."

Harry coughed into his coffee but managed to prevent any of the scalding hot liquid from taking a short cut through his nose. Counting his blessing Harry decided not to press his luck and set his cup down. "I can leave it that long if you'd like."

"Um, no thanks." Remus backpedaled quickly looking down at the mountain of hair at his feet. "I can't imagine trying to walk like this."

"Actually I think I'm done with this prank." Sirius said casually and drew his wand before quickly canceling the spells on him and Remus.

"You mean you could have done that at any time?" Ted asked shocked.

"There isn't a prank spell that the Marauders can't reverse." Sirius boasted.

"We've used almost all of them, including Harry's selection this morning." Remus added.

That's because I learned them from your journals after the war. Harry thought and tossed his napkin on the table and stood up. "Well if that's that I'm going to go get changed before we head out."

"Me too!" Tonks said standing up too.

Harry stopped at the door and turned to scrutinize the adults before turning to Tonks. "You know I don't think giant snakes are bed themed enough for proper payback."

"I'm sure we can come up with something better. It was only your first idea after all." Tonks reassured him. They turned and proceeded to go upstairs taking Hermione with them and leaving the adults looking at each other with uncertain apprehension.

HPCOC

Six adults and three twelve year olds floo'd through to the Leaky Cauldron in a fantastic show of emerald flames. Hestia and Remus went first followed by Andromeda and Ted, the four of them cleared room and the children came next with Sirius and Gwenog taking the tail. Harry noticed that everyone in the bar was looking at them and that they all fell silent when Gwen took Sirius' hand.

"Have you announced your relationship yet?" Harry asked turning to the two of them.

"Today is official confirmation." Gwen said offhandedly.

"We've been seen together enough for T.W.W to publish rumors that we were together." Sirius added.

"We're going to make a statement today." Gwen smiled nervously.

"Hey guys!" Hannah Abbott exclaimed from near the door out back. "We were starting to wonder how long it would take you. Everyone is already here except for the twins."

"The Weasley family is always late though." Blaise called from somewhere outside. Harry's group followed Hannah back outside where, in addition to Blaise, Susan and Daphne were waiting along with two women Harry didn't know. One was clearly Blaise's mom, the other had blond hair and didn't look like she was raised in a pureblood household. Harry assumed she was Mrs. Abbott, which was confirmed almost immediately while introductions and greetings took place.

By the time that was taken care of the Weasley family arrived and the courtyard started to get cramped. The necessary introductions were made again and the massive party, now numbering twenty-three, made their way through the arch into Diagon Alley.

The youngest two Weasleys were starstruck again and barely said anything during the entire outing. The twins spent a good deal of time talking to the rest of the court about their new prank products and ideas, while Percy frowned in disapproval.

The first stop was naturally Gringott's and once they arrived the whole group broke down into smaller groups to go visit their vaults. The Weasleys took a cart of their own, which Harry was glad for remembering how the other him felt opening his vault in front of them. Harry, Blaise, Daphne and Susan all rode together to the section where the older families' trust vaults were. Hannah, Tonks and Hermione stayed in the main lobby, Hermione was changing pounds to galleons and Tonks and Hannah were waiting for their respective mothers, who had taken a third cart to their vaults, Tonks and Hannah staying behind to keep Hermione company.

Within a half an hour the whole group was back in the lobby weighed down with gold and ready to shop. Once they left the bank Molly and Arthur Weasley excused themselves along with Percy, Ron and Ginny with an agreement to meet at Flourish and Blotts at noon. Unlike Ginny the rest of them only had to restock or update their existing supplies and were quickly done shopping for the things they needed, other than books.

Sirius and Gwenog were able to make their 'statement' when they noticed a Daily Prophet reporter heading towards the bookstore. Not willing to miss the chance Gwen waited until she was sure she was recognized and then pushed Sirius up against a wall and gave him a thorough snogging. The interruption only took a couple minutes and the photographer with the reporter got several clear pictures. It wasn't really the kind of story that the Prophet was likely to publish so they were most likely to see those pictures get sold to Teen Witch Weekly.

At noon the group arrived at the bookstore and met up with the rest of the Weasleys. As he moved through the stacks picking out his required books Harry subtly shortened his hair and moved it away

from his scar, while also making his scar a bit more prominent. He had a prank planned for the great golden git, all he needed was for Lockhart to recognize him and give him a free set of books like he did the other time. When he rejoined the adults in the line to get their books signed Harry made sure to place himself in clear view.

Sure enough within a few minutes. "Merlin, is that Harry Potter?"

The photographer roughly pushed his way through the crowd and dragged Harry to the front. Lockhart walked over the Harry and posed with him for a picture. "Together we rate the front page." Lockhart whispered before speaking clearly to the room. "When young Harry here walked into the store today he was expecting to buy my complete works and have them signed by yours truly. But what he wasn't expecting was that in addition to my auto-biography, *Magical Me*, Harry would be receiving the real magical me." He paused to laugh at his pun before continuing. "I am proud to announce that this fall I will be returning to Hogwart's for the first time since I graduated as the new Defense Against the Dark Arts professor." He paused again, but this time it was for applause. "In honor of this occasion I would like to present Harry here with my complete works, FREE OF CHARGE!"

The applause petered out awkwardly as Harry bent over the collection he was presented, counting. "Oh, good, they'll divide evenly."

"What do you mean?" Lockhart asked confused.

"Well, while I am very appreciative of your generosity I can't accept these all for myself, so I'm going to split them up between myself and my friends to lighten everyone's load." Harry explained, drawing more applause.

"Who are your friends?" Lockhart queried.

"My two best friends are Hermione Granger and Tonks." Harry gestured them forward with a feral grin.

"I'm sure I can afford to part with the books for your friends too." Gilderoy said with a smile that sparkled prettily.

"Really? You mean that?" Harry cackled internally. Exactly what I was hoping you'd say.

"Of course, it is really no problem."

"Gee thanks." Harry smiled innocently as the girls were presented with their own Lockhart collections. "Come on forward guys!"

The rest of the court filed through, Harry introduced each as they stepped up. "This is Daphne Greengrass, Slytherin, she's my acting press secretary. Blaise Zabini, also Slytherin, he doesn't talk very often but when he does you should pay attention. Fred and George Weasley, of house Gryffindor, are two of the most accomplished pranksters in Hogwart's history and are incredibly inventive. Susan Bones and Hannah Abbott of house Hufflepuff. Susan's aunt as you know is the head of the DMLE." Gilderoy's smile was looking forced at this point but there was no way that he could tell Harry to stop without looking bad. Once the court had finished Harry was selecting people through eye contact. "Percy Weasley is a sixth year Gryffindor and is my go-to prefect for non-Ravenclaw issues and if I were a betting man I would say that he will be Headboy next year. His youngest brother, Ron, is in my year in Gryffindor and their sister, and first female Weasley in seven generations, Ginny, is just starting this year and I only met her this summer, but she's pretty cool." She blushed deeply at this comment but Harry pressed on knowing that if he stopped he wouldn't be able to get going again. Looking around the room quickly he saw two other people. "Neville Longbottom, Gryffindor, there isn't a lot to say about Neville but if there was only one wizard from my generation that I could have watching my back it'd be Neville. And last but not least is Draco Malfoy, also of Gryffindor, our families have a long history of conflict but Draco and I are trying to work passed that."

The sudden loss of fourteen copies of his complete works was a noticeable loss, unlike losing three of them. Harry had however saved his whole group a great deal of money. No good deed goes unpunished though and Harry had to endure a bit more posturing and playing to the press, Gwenog and Sirius were also caught in this and ended up making a verbal statement to the reporter to go along with their more tangible statement earlier. As they were leaving twenty minutes later Lucius Malfoy made his move, not that anyone saw it.

Once they made it outside Sirius, Tonks, Remus and Gwenog burst into laughter. Sirius was the first to recover. "James would be so proud of you Harry. I don't think we've ever pranked a celebrity in public before."

"You could tell that he was counting the galleons as he was losing them." Tonks chimed in. "He looked more and more constipated with every introduction."

"It was nothing." Harry waved it off.

"He's a professor now though," Andromeda admonished. "I expect you to show him some more respect at school."

"Yes ma'am." Harry said dutifully.

"You know, if the Headmaster chose him to teach he can't be as much of a fraud as you seem to think." Hermione observed.

"You'd be surprised." Harry droned tonelessly.

"Come on, let's go home." Tonks pressed. "Hermione looks like she is about to start reading while we're still here."

HPCOC

A time turned and disguised Harry watched his group exit the alley before focusing on the bookstore again. He had watched the Malfoys enter and his detector had given confirmation of the horcrux being with them. Since they had entered Harry had been closely observing the detector's reaction to people exiting. Ginny was the first he had cleared, along with the rest of his group shortly thereafter. The Malfoys were also clean, and Harry knew that Lucius had planted it on someone. Hours passed and no one who left the building registered on his detector.

The store eventually closed and all the customers were gone, none of them had it. Harry was nervous and that night he warped into the shop and swept it. Harry's nervousness gave way to all out panic when he still was unable to locate it. The clear conclusion was that someone had it and had either concealed it when they were leaving somehow or sent it away through different means.

Harry didn't sleep well that night.

AN:

This chapter would have been up yesterday but people wouldn't quit bothering me.

If no one has noticed yet Chapter 1 has been replaced. I think it is much better now.

I once again find myself with something I intend to tell all y'all but can't for the life of me remember what. *sigh*

* I did no research for this scene, I could be way off base with everything, but that's how this world works now.

"Susan, your compact is vibrating."

"It's not a compact Aunt Amy." Susan Bones called back, rolling her eyes. "It's a highly advanced communications device."

"Two-way mirrors aren't highly advanced anymore." Amelia Bones replied cynically as her niece picked up the mirror.

"Hello Hannah." Susan said to the mirror, ignoring her aunt.

"Hi Susan." Hannah Abbott's voice quietly played through the mirror. "Can you take me somewhere private if you aren't already in such a place?"

"Sure." Susan turned her nose up at her aunt. "Excuse me Aunty, I have very important business to take care of maybe."

Amelia's chuckles followed Susan halfway back to her room. She closed the door behind her when she got there. "What's up Hannah?"

"Why are you looking down?" Hannah asked perplexed.

"I'm not, I'm looking straight at the mirror." Susan frowned. "It actually looks like you're looking up at something."

"Really? That's strange." Hannah trailed off for a moment. "Am I still in your mirror or are you projecting the image?"

"You're still just in the mirror, hang on." Susan made a pinch and throw motion and an image of Hannah appeared in the air in front of her. "Is that better?"

"Much." Hannah nodded approvingly. "It's almost as good as face to face."

"Yea, Harry, or whoever, did a really good job on these." Susan stroked her mirror appreciatively. "Now I don't think I needed to leave my aunt in the other room just to discuss that."

"Too true." Hannah laughed once then donned a serious face. "Did you hear how Harry introduced us yesterday?"

"Yea, what about it?" Susan frowned.

"We were Amelia Bones' niece and the other Hufflepuff." Hannah said irritatedly with a small huff.

"I'm sure Harry didn't mean anything by it." Susan reassured her. "It isn't like he had long to prepare."

"That's just it though." Hannah's irritation unabated. "I got the same introduction as Ronald Weasley. As far as I can tell, after the first week he never even spent time with Harry."

"Well, I can see why that would upset you." Susan admitted. "After all, who wants to be equals with him. But I fail to see your point."

"Alright, let's put it another way." Hannah said impatiently. "Do you like Harry?"

Susan blushed brightly. "Well, I mean, I haven't really—"

"I didn't mean like that!" Hannah sighed. "As friends, silly, do you like having him as a friend?"

"Oh," Susan giggled for a moment. "Well, yes, of course I like having Harry as a friend."

"And you want to continue having him as a friend?"

"Naturally."

"Have you noticed how useful the other members of the court are?"

"Erm, yes?" Susan sounded worried.

"Have you noticed how not useful we are?"

"Oh Hannah! You're not useless!" Susan scolded. "I thought we talked about this."

"No, I didn't say useless, I said not useful." Hannah rolled her eyes. "As in we have no role within the group."

"Well, that's not good and all, but I'm still missing it." Susan shook her head.

"Harry is going places." Hannah stated plainly. "I don't know where yet, probably Minister of Magic, but I know for damn sure he won't be able to take dead weight with him. He only has so much time for friends, and if they can't participate in the activities they'll get left behind. Every year new competition comes in, this year there are two first year girls that are already a threat to our standing."

"Um...Hannah?" Susan said quietly.

"Luna Lovegood is the biggest danger. She was at the press conference and wrote that weird article for The Quibbler. She seemed impressed with Harry."

"Hannah." Susan said a little more firmly.

"And then there's Ginny Weasley. She has an in, being the twins' sister, and her introduction yesterday was longer than both of ours combined."

"HANNAH!"

"What?" Hannah seemed shocked to be interrupted.

"You've put a lot of thought into this haven't you?"

"Well, yes."

"Then can we cut to the chase." Susan said professionally. "What are you suggesting?"

"I'm suggesting that if we don't get skills, Harry is going to replace us with younger prettier models." Hannah retorted.

"I don't think Harry is so callous as to trade friends like that." Susan crossed her arms and cocked an eyebrow.

"Well, it won't be immediate." Hannah admitted. "It'll take a couple of years, but that's why we have to start now."

"Don't you think you're taking this a little too seriously?"

"If you're happy being 'Amelia Bones' niece' for the rest of your life feel free to hang up."

"Are you suggesting that 'Harry Potter's friend' is all that better of a title?" Susan's skepticism was practically tangible.

"At least three times better." Hannah shot back smugly. "First of all, he's in our generation, I'm sure you've heard enough from your aunt to know how much generation gaps effect things. Second, his current influence is already unheard of for someone our age and it is still growing, unlike your aunt, who unfortunately, barring significant unforeseeable changes, is likely to be in the last office of her life. Third, he's Harry bloody Potter! He's an amazing guy, both the celebrity and the regular every day Harry, that should count as two actually."

"That makes it sound like we'd be using him." Susan was very worried at this point, at least Hannah seemed to be over the self esteem issues Susan helped her deal with at the beginning of the year.

"No, I'm saying we should make ourselves useful to him so he doesn't leave us behind." Hannah placated Susan. "Basically, we let him use us, and in return we're in the places we need to be to meet the people we need to meet, no matter what our profession."

"Well, that sounds acceptable. What did you have in mind for professions?" Susan asked intently. "My aunt wants me to follow her to the ministry, but I've always wanted to work in the private sector."

"I don't know, I was planning on using the rest of August to figure that out for myself." Hannah replied, deflating. "I don't want to go to the ministry either."

"Is there anything else you have to add to your idea?"

"Nope, that's it. You in?"

"Tentatively, yes. I'm going to make sure you don't stray across the line of ethics though." Susan scowled pointedly.

"Yes, ma'am." Hannah saluted mockingly. "Breakfast is just about done so I need to go."

"Okay, it was nice talking to you." Susan smiled warmly.

"You too." Hannah smiled back just as warmly.

"Bye Hannah."

"Bye Susan." Hannah's farewell came as Susan started to close her mirror, thereby ending the connection. "WAIT!"

Susan jumped and quickly pulled her mirror fully open again.
"What?"

"So, do you have a crush on Harry?" Hannah asked smirking.

"Hannah!" Susan huffed and shut the mirror immediately and fell face first onto her pillow to cover her blush.

HPCOC

"What the?" Tonks mumbled as she woke up with a piece of parchment stuck to her nose. She tugged on it and found that it wasn't budging. At least I can still see. She thought as she rose from bed and staggered wearily over to her mirror. She sat down and looked at the parchment. It was a note, written backwards so that it would be readable in a mirror.

Nym,

The delivery of this letter is just a preview, wait until you see how I gave Padfoot his. I hope that you got around to reading this before you made the trip across the hall to wake me up. If not you have already found that I'm not in my bed right now.

Went to G.N.I.C.C HQ. Back at five.

Harry.

Oh, and you're, probably, sitting on the password to remove the sticking charm.

Tonks stood up and looked down at the seat. Sure enough there was a piece of tape with a word written on it. "Wotcher?"

The note released from her nose with an audible click and as it floated to the floor Tonks spotted another line on the back.

And tell Padfoot I said 'Gilgamesh'

Tonks folded up the note and set it on her desk. She smiled serenely and went about getting ready for the day. After dealing with her morning routine Tonks made a quick mirror call to Hermione, only to find out that she would be unavailable today as well, something about a family outing somewhere.

Put out and alone Tonks grumpily made her way over to her new school books and took them to her bed to glance over briefly. Two hours later she was called down for breakfast. Her bed was a mess, each of her brand new Lockhart books had been tossed across the bed after she had read a few pages. She wasn't sure yet whether or not Lockhart was a fraud, but he was definitely more interested in boosting his ego than eliminating monsters. The shameless self flattery got nauseating after a very short period of time.

She had made some good progress through The Book of Spells: Grade 2 but so far had refrained from actually casting any. She could tell already that this year charms class was going to be starting to move away from the spells that teach you how to cast, to the basics of theory. She calmly set her book down and hopped off her bed before making her way down to the dining room.

The scene she found was one of barely constrained mirth. Remus and her dad were both biting their lips, Hestia was giggling outright while her sister was trying to reassure Sirius that he still looked dashing despite the torn piece of parchment stuck to his forehead. Tonks laughed when she saw him. "Wotcher everyone. Padfoot, there's something on your face." She spun when she heard a loud laugh from behind her and saw her mother leaning heavily on the wall, laughing.

"Harry did it." Sirius said glumly. "He left a note saying that he'd be out until this evening. Why haven't you asked already?"

"He left a note stuck to my face too." Tonks grinned as she poured herself some juice.

"How did you get it off?" Sirius squawked indignantly. "We've tried everything we could think of."

"He gave me the password." Tonks gloated as she helped herself to eggs and waffles.

"Well?" Sirius said after a moment of silence.

"Well what?" She asked innocently as she added strawberries to her waffles.

"What's the password?" Sirius demanded sharply.

"It was a different password than he set for yours." Tonks shrugged.

"And you know this how?"

"I already said my password once and it didn't do anything." Tonks chuckled.

"I don't suppose he saw fit to tell you what the one for mine is?" Sirius' foot was obviously tapping on the floor.

"Of course he did. But I think this look suits you." The rest of the adults in the room started laughing again.

"And you used to be my favorite cousin too." Sirius sighed shaking his head.

"Hey!" Andromeda shouted jokingly offended.

"Sorry Andy." Sirius smiled. "But unlike your daughter, if I ever wanted to book you as a clown you'd have to put on make up and a wig."

"HEY!" Tonks squealed, hair turning an angry red.

"See!" Sirius gleefully pointed. "She proves my point for me! Ack!"

"NYMPHADORA! Do not fling eggs at people!" Andromeda scolded.

"Sorry Mum." Tonks muttered looking at her plate.

"It's not me that you should be apologizing to."

"Okay..." Tonks trailed and looked at Sirius. "Gilgamesh."

With another audible click the piece of parchment fell off of Sirius' forehead and into his coffee. "Oh, thank Merlin. You're forgiven Tonks. You should have seen it before we ripped the note off. It was hanging in front of my face and I had to hold it up if I wanted to see anything other than my name."

"Yea, Harry's note said that he got you worse than he got me." Tonks smiled. "He's such a sweetheart."

Ted Tonks shared a silent conversation with his wife about whether or not she maintained that it was a good idea to live with the boy who wooed their daughter. Andromeda Tonks' opinion was unchanged, if anything she seemed more confident about it than before.

HPCOC

"GINEVRA MOLLY WEASLEY!" Molly Weasley shouted through the house. "STOP TWIRLING AROUND BEFORE YOU BREAK SOMETHING!"

"It's been almost a whole day." Percy droned from the kitchen table.
"You'd think she would have calmed down by now."

"I wonder" George said flatly.

"If Harry" Fred added just as flatly as his twin.

"Knew that this was going to happen"

"When he said she was cool." Fred finished.

"Where does she find the energy?" Ron asked impressed. "She barely eats anything and she's been dancing around for hours."

"Ron, compared to you none of us eat more" Fred drawled.

"Than barely anything." George sniped.

"Twins, be nice to your brother." Molly reprimanded.

"Anyway boys," Arthur said looking over the top of the morning's paper, whose front page featured a picture of Harry and Lockhart. "It was the second time she'd seen her idol, and he complimented her. It is expected that she'd be very excited."

"We know." Fred moaned.

"But come on, this is a bit much." George finished and gestured in the general direction of Ginny's last known location.

"Oops!" Ginny exclaimed giddily as the sound of breaking glass came from the other side of the house from where George was pointing. "Sorry!"

"GINNY!" Molly shouted before rampaging out of the room.

"I think it is time for Plan B." George grumbled and Fred, Ron and Percy all nodded.

"What's Plan B?" Arthur asked concerned.

"Dad, the four of us" Fred started eyes pleading.

"Were wondering" George continued with the same eyes.

"If there was any chance" Ron continued, to Arthur's surprise.

"Any iota of possibility" Percy added, again surprising Arthur.

"That you would let us spend the rest of the summer with Bill." They finished together.

Arthur laughed. "You've obviously rehearsed that. Sorry boys, I don't think that is going to happen, maybe next year."

"You always say maybe next year." Ron grumbled. "That's just code for never."

"On to Plan C then." Percy pressed.

"Do I even want to know?" Arthur frowned.

"Can we stay with Charlie?" Fred asked hopefully while George nodded emphatically.

"No, sorry." Arthur shook his head.

"Plan D then." Ron insisted.

"Alright, I'll go owl the Headmaster." Percy nodded and walked up the stairs.

"You're going to bother Dumbledore about this?" Arthur asked incredulously.

"Well, you wouldn't listen to reason." Fred defended.

"What other choice did we have?" George asked.

"It's only been a day Dad, I don't think I can handle three more weeks of this." Ron added.

"And what do you expect Dumbledore to be able to do about it?" Arthur asked, crossing his arms.

"Hopefully, he'll give us sanctuary." George admitted.

"Percy thinks his prefect influence will be enough pull." Fred added.

"I never thought I would see the day" George started.

"That I'd be happy" Fred continued.

"That any brother of mine"

"Could become a prefect." They finished together somberly.

"Go tell Percy to cancel the owl. You're not running away from your sister for the rest of the summer. If your mother talking to her now doesn't calm her down I'll have a conversation with her this evening." Arthur said authoritatively. "And that's that. And no pranking her either!"

"Fine." The twins chorused and rose to go upstairs. Ron continued to eat.

HPCOC

Breakfast was ending at the Black residence when an owl flew in and landed in front of Gwenog. She immediately recognized the envelope as one of the ones that the managers of the Harpies use. She had retrieved and opened the letter so quickly that the onlookers were certain that accidental magic had played a role.

"Gwenog!" Andromeda admonished. "How many times have we gone over the reading at the table rule?"

"I don't care Andy." Gwenog mumbled as she continued to read. Tonks snickered into her plate when she saw her mother's shocked expression. After a few more moments Gwenog shrieked happily. "I MADE IT! I'M THE NEW CAPTAIN OF THE HOLYHEAD HARPIES!"

Breakfast was over at that point as the occupants of the house had a spontaneous party. Gwenog had the team over and a couple of friends but the invite list was short, there would be an official announcement later and no one outside the team was supposed to know until then.

HPCOC

Harry stood outside the Gaunt Shack while the mid-afternoon sun beat down on him. This was the only horcrux that Harry hadn't dealt with personally in his last life. He had been putting off this retrieval simply because he didn't know what to expect.

Procrastinating won't make this easier. Harry thought grimly and approached the door. The shack itself looked like it was about to fall over and Harry was sure that there were wards specifically to keep it standing. The door itself was nothing remarkable but it was adorned with the skeleton of a snake long dead. In Harry's mage sight the house shimmered with many layers of wards.

"Speak friend, if you have the authority of the great one. For none but his chosen can tread this path safely." The snake skeleton hissed, rearing up as Harry approached.

Harry rolled his eyes. "In the name of Salazar Slytherin I command you to grant me entry."

"Yessssssssss" The skeleton's hiss persisted for the entire time that it took for the door to swing open.

Harry cast a bubble head charm and peered in through the door. The floor was lit up with more runes than Harry could count, many he didn't recognize, but everything that he could make out were very unpleasant. The same furniture was there as when the Gaunts were still alive and they seemed untouched by the enchantments. So it's like a high stakes game of 'The Floor is Lava'. Well that's no problem.

Harry took his detector out of the fire proof case he had made for it. With that in hand Harry gently lifted off the ground and floated through the door. The detector led him to one corner and his eyes showed something hidden in the wall.

A quick blasting curse revealed a dull iron box. Nothing registered magically about the box but several things inside did, and the horcrux detector was spraying flames at it constantly. Still being cautious Harry levitated the box out of the hole in the wall.

As soon as it moved one of the magical signatures inside the box flared and a scream filled the air. Harry dropped to his knees and clutched his head trying to stop the noise from getting in his ears. It wasn't until he noticed his wand rolling away that he realized he had touched the floor. SHIT!

He felt the wards trigger one by one and heard the door slam closed. Anti-apparition and anti-portkey wards sprung into place, which were redundant since Harry didn't bother to take down the ones that were in place before. Most curse breakers would but it wasn't a necessary precaution for Harry.

As Harry scrambled for his wand poisonous water snakes started filling the room. They were hissing unintelligibly as they slithered towards Harry. "In the name of Salazar Slytherin I command you to stop!" Harry shouted in parseltongue, to no avail.

One of the snakes had grabbed Harry's wand and was starting to crawl back towards the hole it came out of. Meanwhile water was

starting to rush into the room at an alarming rate. Harry didn't even want to contemplate how difficult it would be to reclaim his wand if the snakes started swimming.

Harry grabbed the box and warped in front of the snake who had his wand. There were now snakes all around him and they started biting him wherever they could reach as Harry grabbed the wand thief and dug his claws deep into it. He was surprised that there was no blood but the snake dropped his wand and started biting his arm instead.

Harry didn't waste his chance and dropped the snake to grab his wand and warped back to his manor without a second thought. The poison was making its way through his system when he arrived, the wand thief snake still attached to his arm, and he collapsed weakly, just outside the arrival area. "Marny." He called quietly and shakily before passing out.

HPCOC

"I can't believe Potter is in the paper again!" Theodore Nott complained through the floo to Pansy Parkinson. "He didn't even do anything and they're giving him more publicity."

"I know!" Pansy agreed shrilly from the other fireplace. "It's not like he does anything special."

"The only reason he's doing better than us is because of all his training." Nott ranted.

"Yea, why was he allowed to learn magic before the rest of us in the first place?" Pansy was offended.

"Probably just because he's famous." Nott sneered.

"Yea." Pansy changed her voice to a shrill mocking tone. "'Oooo it's the boy-who-sucks, let's give him everything he wants!'"

"That's probably exactly how it went too." Nott grimaced. "I know! I'll get father to get me the best tutors available next summer and you me and Tracy can catch up to Potter!"

"Then we'll show him, right?" Pansy nodded eagerly.

"Right!" Nott slammed his fist down emphatically, on the stone mantel, and immediately started shaking his hand limply. "Ow."

Pansy ignored Nott's mistake politely. "The magic he uses can't be all that hard, after all, he's only a half-blood."

"That's right." Nott said through the pain. "I'll go talk to Dad."

"Okay, let me know what he says. Bye." Pansy said as Nott pulled his head out of the fire and ended the call.

HPCOC

Harry woke with a groan. He was sure that he had never felt this bad in his life. He was suffering every symptom he associated with being sick and his legs felt like they were full of molten lead. He opened his eyes slowly and recognized the master bedroom of his manor.

"Master Harry Potter sir," exclaimed a high pitched voice that could only belong to a house elf. "Yous is awake!"

"Uungh," Harry moaned. "What happened to me?"

"Yous was bitten twenty-three times by various types of snakes." The elf said seriously. "It took us almost an hour to keep yous alive."

"How long have I been out?" Harry groaned.

"Nearly six hours, Harry Potter sir." The elf replied. "It is just after nine o'clock, we took the liberty of writing a note to your Paddyfeet but haven't delivered it yet."

"How long until I'm recovered enough to leave?" Harry asked shortly.

"I a couple of days you should have recovered enough to stand." The elf said helpfully.

"That's not good enough." Harry said with disappointment, the elf looked like he was about to start beating himself with a nearby bookend before Harry stopped him. "None of that. Just go get Marny."

POP. Marny was suddenly standing in front of Harry. "Does Harry Potter sir need something?"

"Oh, right, name calling thing." Harry shook his head trying to clear his mind. "Um, Marny, could you get me box number...box number...damn I can't remember. Will you bring me the black leather bound journal that's on my desk in my study?"

Two sharp pops later Marny was back with the book. Harry thanked him and took the book and started flipping through it quickly. "Aha! Could you bring me box number forty-two, a goblet and a knife please? And try to be quiet."

Marny popped out much more quietly this time and Harry knew that it would be a couple minutes before he got back. Harry looked to the elf that was here when he woke up. "You're Patchy, right?"

"Oh, yes sir, Harry Potter sir!" Patchy seemed ecstatic that Harry remembered his name.

"Can you help me sit up? I'm going to need to drink something shortly." Harry motioned him over and the two of them carefully managed to get Harry upright.

"Alright," Harry said when Marny returned with the requested items. "You two will be responsible for keeping me from bleeding out if I'm wrong about this."

Both elves nodded solemnly as Harry placed the goblet in between his legs, so they were holding it upright. He took the Philosopher's Stone out of its resting place and set it on his lap next to the goblet. Then he took the knife and with a quick motion opened his left wrist.

After he had bled about a cup of blood into the goblet Harry picked up the stone and dunked it in his blood several times, not unlike someone dunking a donut in a cup of coffee. With each dunk his blood got clearer and less viscous until it was crystal clear and the consistency of water, it was still blood red though. Dropping the stone back into the box Harry grabbed the goblet and drank the elixir in just a couple seconds.

Harry immediately felt the change. His head cleared instantly and the burning in his legs slowly started to abate. The cut on his left

arm was already sealed over and he was regaining a healthy complexion. As he was progressively getting better he looked to his elves. "I guess I did it right."

The two elves were practically bouncing with joy as they watched their master's wounds heal in front of their eyes. Patchy immediately popped off to tell the others the good news. Marny looked up at him with unshed tears of joy. "If Harry Potter sir is done I can put everything away."

"Thank you Marny, could you also label the box that I arrived with? I think seven would be a good number for it, but I'll deal with the contents some other day." Marny nodded enthusiastically. "Oh, and if you finished compiling that file I asked for this morning then you should bring that along with a writing desk and everything I need to write."

Harry leaned back against the headboard and closed his eyes while Marny got the items. Well, they couldn't all be easy. Harry thought calmly. At least now all I should have to deal with are they 'put-me-on' curse and the 'if-you-put-me-on-you'll-die' curse. It can't be that bad though, it only sealed the fate of Dumbledore last time. Harry laughed quietly at the tone of sarcasm those thoughts took.

Marny popped back into the room and floated the writing desk and everything else onto Harry's lap. After glancing through the file, Harry started writing random math equations on the pieces of blank parchment. At 10:30 Harry decided that he was recovered fully and had enough fake math. He attached his math to the front of the folder with a paper clip and climbed out of bed. After putting his clothes back on and turning back to 4:30 that afternoon Harry made sure there were no visible signs of his day he disillusioned himself and warped back to his room at Grimmauld Place.

He was alone in his room so he dropped the disillusionment and walked out into the hall. He was surprised by how much noise was coming from downstairs and went down to investigate. He walked into the parlor and into the still lively party.

"What are we celebrating?" He called over the din.

"HARRY!" Tonks shouted and ran over to him, hugging him tightly when she arrived. She took his hand and started pulling him through

the crowd. It was then that he saw a huge banner reading: 'Congratulations Captain Jones!' and he knew what was going on.

"Congrats Gwen." Harry said has Tonks pulled him into view of the table.

"Thanks Harry," Gwen smiled brightly. "But it's not like this is a surprise for you."

"You're right, it's not." Harry admitted laughing and dropped his file on the table. "It's funny that this happened today, because I brought the file that made me so certain you would get it."

Gwen looked down suspiciously at the folder and noticed the words 'Holyhead Harpies' written across the front. She opened it cautiously. The top page that Harry had added was on the left and read:

Likelihood of Captaincy :

Jones 67%

Green 13%

Aberdeen 8%

Lawson 6%

Marcs 4%

Grimbleman 2%

New Chaser 0%

Behind that were all of the pages of fake math Harry did. She frowned at them in confusion. Gwen looked up at Harry. "This isn't any arithmancy I've every seen."

"It's not arithmancy." Harry shook his head. "Nick called it statistics, the muggle version of arithmancy or something. The numbers are all gibberish to me, but I didn't do that math so it might make perfect sense."

"I see." Gwen said as she looked to the other half of the folder and found newspaper clipping and sheets of records dating all the way back to when Gwen joined the team, and she was the most senior member. "I don't know whether this is impressive or creepy."

"Neither. It is merely an outlet for boredom." Harry assured her.

"So do they have files for all the teams?" Gwenog asked slyly.

"Sure do!" Harry smiled. "But they're not going to give you those ones. In fact I'm going to need to take that file back once you're done looking at it."

"I understand, this obviously took a lot of time and effort." Gwen nodded appreciatively.

"Um, yea." Harry laughed and turned to Sirius with an evil smirk. "So did you find my note this morning alright? I was worried that I didn't put it in a noticeable enough place."

Everyone at the table burst into laughter except for Sirius, who just glared at Harry. "Yea, I found it. Next time would you be so kind as to not leave the password with an extortionist?"

"Oh, Nym! I'm so proud!" Harry said as he clasped his hand together and tilted his head to the side slightly, smiling the whole time.

"Yea yea, laugh it up." Sirius grumbled with a smile.

"So tell us, how exactly did you manage to do that?" Remus inquired. "Nothing we did could undo it but we identified it as a basic sticking charm."

"Do you remember the cardinal rule of magic and languages?" Harry asked rhetorically, knowing that this was third year charms material.

"Of course, a spell cast specifically in one language can only be reversed by a spell cast specifically in that same language." Remus recited.

"What do you mean specifically?" Tonks asked with a frown.

"In England our incantations are based on the Latin language, but the same spells have incantations in other languages, let's use French for this example." Remus was completely in professor mode now. "Now the French Magicals cast their spells, by default, in a variation of French. Now I don't know the arithmancy behind it but our magic can distinguish whether we're casting by default or by choice. Still with me?"

"Mmhmm." Tonks nodded.

"Good, now, spells cast this way are non-specific, as in it is irrelevant which language it is because the magic just comes out as default. I can cast a spell in Latin and a French wizard could reverse it in French. However if I specifically cast a spell in a foreign language, as in not my default incantation language, the magic works in a more specific way. Let's say that I am in a duel with a French wizard and a German wizard, they both only know their native languages and their native defaults, but I also can incant in French. They both hit me with minor hexes, one in French and one in German, and I counter them both with a Latin incantation before I return fire with a French spell at each of them. Both spells land true and the French wizard quickly reverses his but try as he might there is simply nothing that the German wizard can do, until either myself or the French wizard release the spell."

"I see." Tonks said appreciatively. "So that means that Harry can incant in different languages than Latin?"

"Correct." Remus said then turned to Harry. "So can we inquire which ones?"

"English and Latin of course, but also French and Celtic." Harry said smugly.

"We tried all of those." Sirius whined.

"Yes, but did you try the Ancient and Noble Language of the Serpents?" Harry grinned cheekily.

"Oh, that's so not fair!" Sirius complained loudly. "How are we supposed to compete with that?"

"Fine, I won't use it for any more pranks." Harry sighed.

"Good." Sirius smiled. "Good prank by the way."

"I'm glad you liked it." Harry said laughing.

"So, Harry." Hestia said leaning forward. "Tell us all about your day."

"Yea!" Tonks implored from next to him.

"Anything interesting happen?" Andromeda asked.

"Oh," Almost died at least twice, recovered a shard of an undead dark lord's soul for later destruction and made Elixir of Life. "Just the usual, nothing that warrants mentioning."

HPCOC

Over the next few weeks Harry managed to over come and remove the two curses on the ring that he was worried about. Turns out they were parslemagic, which explains why Dumbledore couldn't save himself in the last life. He also took the time to pry the stone off the ring and stored it in box 34. While no technical progress had been made Harry was very happy with his prep work.

He also took the time to analyze the snake that had been latched onto his arm. The first thing he discovered was that it wasn't a real snake but just a construct of wood and magic designed to steal wands and bite indiscriminately. He was unfortunately unable to determine anything about the poison from the traces that remained after the rest had been injected into his arm, but they all agreed that it was potentially lethal.

He also made a vial of elixir and fastened it to his wand holster with a parseltongue incanted sticking charm. There were only a few really useful times for foreign incantations. Those were primarily dueling and pranking, every other time was a rare circumstance, like this one. Casting like that was simply more inconvenient than it was usually worth.

August 31st finally arrived and Hermione was staying over so her parents wouldn't have to brave the traffic around the station. They spent most of the night planning and plotting for the next day. Before he went to bed Harry asked Marny to wake him at four in the

morning, without waking anyone else. He fell asleep with a smile on his lips.

HPCOC

Dear Tom,

Tomorrow is September first. Hogwart's will be starting for the year and I'll finally get to see Harry Potter again. I'm so excited!

AN: Yay! Long chapter! Just about 6 thousand words, which doesn't seem like much now that I read it.

:(
It took just over 14 word document pages though. Hope you liked it!

JR

"Harry Potter sir shouldn't be doing that!" Marny cried as he popped into the room the morning of September first.

"Marny!" Harry scolded the small creature. "Are you trying to dictate what hobbies I may and may not pursue?"

"No!" Marny cried panicked. "Of course not, but-"

"Are you trying to tell me that I can't do nice things for my family?"

"No Harry Potter sir. But-"

"No buts. I'm going back to school today and I won't see them for months. I'm making breakfast." Harry said with finality, waving a whisk around in emphasis.

"I'm not trying to stop you Harry Potter sir!" Marny plead.

"Oh." Harry stopped and blinked a couple times. "So what's the problem?"

"Those eggs are hardboiled. You can't scramble them." Marny explained. "I was going to ask if Harry Potter sir would like me to bring some fresh ones."

"Oh, well that explains why you let me cook all that other stuff before interrupting." Harry said quirking an eyebrow. "And I'm not making scrambled eggs, I'm making French Omelets. And yes, please."

"My mistake Harry Potter sir." Marny said quickly and popped out of the room.

"Um, Harry?" Hermione asked from the table where she and Tonks were plating food. "Who was that?"

"That's Marny, Potter Head Elf." Harry smiled and turned to Tonks. "I did what you suggested and called them. Their main duty is to keep the Potter properties maintained until I come of age."

"Oh," Hermione said softly. "I'm not really sure what to make of this."

"Well, they need the work and they can go to the places that I'm not even allowed to know the location of yet." Harry shrugged. "If I didn't have them doing what they've been doing for the last decade, I wouldn't have a home to go to after Hogwart's."

There was a pause in conversation as Marny popped back with a bowl full of eggs. "Pappy pulled those out from under your chickens yesterday Harry Potter sir. I asked for fresher but he said that the chickens wouldn't lay anymore until dawn."

"That's wonderful Marny." Harry beamed and took the bowl. "Thank you very much and pass my thanks on to Pappy please."

"How many work for you?" Tonks asked curiously as Harry started to prepare the eggs.

"Thirty-two." Harry lied. "And three houses across the continent."

"Three houses!" Hermione repeated incredulously.

"That's fairly modest by pureblood standards." Tonks told her haughtily.

"Like you would know." Harry droned as he poured the first serving of egg mix into his pan.

"Hey!"

"Well it's true." Harry made a face over his shoulder at her.

"I'll have you know, mister, that my mother made sure that I would understand pureblood politics, and land ownership is part of that." Tonks crossed her arms. "The Black family has this apartment, a manor in Wales and one in Scotland, a villa in Sicily, a plantation in the colonies somewhere and vacation homes in France, Morocco, the Philippines and Cuba."

"Speaking of families, they're going to be waking up soon. Nym, could you go transfigure some tables for them?" Harry asked looking away from his work.

"Sure thing!" Tonks said merrily and bounced out of the room.

"I should start on the coffee." Hermione said more to herself than to Harry and busied herself with that while Harry turned back to his eggs.

A little while later the kitchen was empty of human occupants. The table now held four trays, three with two covered dishes and cups of coffee each, one with three covered dishes, two cups of coffee and a smoothie. All four trays and the food they held were under holding charms to keep them fresh for a few more minutes.

In the parlor however Harry was conjuring a large bed for the three of them while Hermione and Tonks were triple checking that the floor was clear enough to prevent anything from getting damaged. Harry finished first and ran to the kitchen and retrieved the larger tray with the three plates and cups. After he put it on the bed he just made and stood back with a satisfied smirk an excessively loud rooster crow filled the house.

"They're up!" Harry cried gleefully as three shrill feminine shrieks came from upstairs. "Let's go get their food before they find the first password."

"PADFOOT!" They heard Remus bellow as the hurried back to the kitchen.

"IT WASN'T ME MOONY!" Sirius shouted back. "TED! DID YOU DO THIS?"

"WE'RE TRAPPED TOO!" Ted called from his room just as the kids picked up the trays.

The silence in that moment was ominous. The three kids met each others' eyes knowing what was coming back and that they were at the point of no return. Their moment of contemplation was over when all three men upstairs drew a simultaneous conclusion. As one they acted and called out. "HARRY!"

The women shrieked again but this time the men also screamed as the sound of three doors slamming open echoed down the stairs. The three preteens were snickering as they carried their trays back to the parlor. The sound of wood impacting wood was starting to fill the air when Hestia completed words for the first time in the morning. "SHIT! They're taking us down the stairs! AAAAHHHHH!"

The sound of wood hitting wood was punctuated with the sound of wood scraping on wood and also by the sound of people who were strapped onto beds that were sliding down staircases. One by one the beds that the adults slept in made their way into the parlor. Even with the trauma of their unusual exercise the beds all seemed to be in perfect condition. The owners weren't so sound.

During the night Harry had made his rounds and cast a spell on each bed that would slowly tighten the sheets until any underneath them couldn't move. After that there was a simple animation charm to bring them downstairs and an expansion charm on the doorways, so they could actually make it out of their rooms, both with a password trigger, the trigger being Harry's name. After that all he needed was something to surprise them enough to get them panicking. A time delayed rooster and sonorous turned out to be an ideal solution.

They had clearly all panicked at some point. Everyone's hair was mussed beyond repair and everyone's face was either red from exertion as they tried to get free, or pale as a ghost, if the stairs really scared them. Gwenog looked like she was the least effected by the prank but that was to be expected from someone who makes her living doing death defying stunts. All six of them were glaring at Harry with shockingly identical looks.

"Oh, good, you're all up." Harry smiled broadly. "We can't serve you breakfast in bed if you're still asleep."

"I don't think anyone could have slept through that." Sirius muttered.

"If I could move I would elbow you for that." Gwenog quipped playfully. "So you made us breakfast in bed?"

"Yea, I hope you don't mind that I still wanted to eat together." Harry motioned to the girls and took the tray he was carrying to Gwenog and Sirius.

"That's really nice of you three." Andromeda beamed as her daughter presented her with a tray. "But customarily you're trying to leave them relaxed, not scare them half to death first."

"Where is the fun in that?" Tonks asked rhetorically.

"Alright, so this morning's menu:" Harry said dramatically as the three kids took the lids off the plates. "Seared Polenta with shallots and fresh thyme topped with beurre blanc and white wine sautéed mushrooms. Next we have a French Omelet with tarragon, feta and sun dried tomatoes served on a bed of wilted spinach and toasted pine nuts. Filling out the savory portion of the meal are Rosti Potato triangles with a vinegary mustard dipping sauce. Finally we have Greek Yogurt with a wild berry compote and the best coffee I could find in London."

"Holy crap." Sirius muttered as the aromas hit him.

"This is amazing Harry." Hestia sighed.

"I couldn't have done it without my two beautiful sous chefs." Harry said as he, Tonks and Hermione, who were both blushing, situated themselves on their bed, Tonks had the smoothie. Harry was three bites in before he noticed the jealous glares from the adults. He immediately figured out the problem. "Oh, right, sorry. Dig in!"

Having said the second password the bed sheets released their captives, who dove right into their food. Harry's ego got a nice boost as all he heard for the rest of the meal was satisfied groans.

"Wow you three." Remus said appreciatively when he finished eating, a full half hour after starting. "I never thought I would say it, but who needs meat?"

HPCOC

Across the country Gilderoy Lockhart was arriving at his office for the first time. He was hoping to be done setting up his area early enough to catch a nap before he would have to start primping for the arrival of the students that evening.

He finished around two that afternoon. Still feeling very refreshed Gilderoy walked over to his bookshelf and took down a very special book that he was sure would catch Harry Potter's attention. He was going to be Harry's mentor if it killed him. Taking it back to his desk he sat down with a quill and, after removing its protective case, began to write.

HPCOC

"Is everything packed Draco?" Lucius asked as he strode into the dinning room.

"Yes Father." Draco replied dutifully.

"You're not forgetting that book I gave you, right?"

"No Father."

"Good, now eat. There is a long train ride ahead of you."

"Yes Father."

HPCOC

"Are you ready Hannah?" Mrs. Abbott called from their living room.

"Yes mum!" Hannah called back as she dragged her trunk down the hall.

"You sure? I feel awful sending heavy things with the owls."

"And you don't feel awful making me get a hernia with this stupid trunk?" Hannah retorted cynically as she struggled with the trunk.

"Let me get your father to help you with that dear." Mrs. Abbott said and walked out of the room, calling for her husband.

"Too late!" Hannah shouted as she lost her hold on the trunk and watched helplessly as it slid down the stairs. It opened along the way and, when it got to the bottom, it tipped onto its side spilling some of its contents on the floor. "Shoot."

Her parents returned to the room just as she was getting the last of her robes back where they belonged. With a quick sigh she glanced around again to double check. She gasped in horror and sprang to her feet. With a couple quick moves she leaped over to her dad and snatched the book he had out of his hand. "Give me that!"

"What's that?" Her father asked bewildered.

"Nothing." Hannah stated stubbornly.

"Diary." Her mother supplied knowingly drawing an indignant gasp from Hannah, who then threw her diary in her trunk and slammed the lid closed, casting a sealing charm on it for good measure. Her mom smiled smugly. "Yup, diary."

HPCOC

"Hey Gin Gin." Fred said coyly as he walked with his twin.

"What'cha got there?" George asked with a smirk.

"Nothing." Ginny turned away from her brothers, putting her body between them and what she had in her lap.

"Oh, that doesn't sound like nothing." Fred teased.

"In fact, you make it sound rather important." George added.

"MUM! FRED AND GEORGE ARE MAKING FUN OF ME!" Ginny shouted at the top of her lungs and smirked at the sheer dread in the twins' eyes.

"BOYS!" Molly thundered from below. "WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO DEAL WITH YOU TODAY! BEHAVE FOR ONCE."

"B-b-but." Fred stammered.

"W-we-ee" George stuttered.

"Didn't?" Fred said questioningly.

"Do anything..." George trailed off.

"That doesn't sound like us." They said together.

"Ginny, why do you have to do this to us?" Fred demanded.

"I thought you liked us." George begged.

"Well that was before you tried to pry into my privacy." Ginny scoffed.
"Now get out of my room."

HPCOC

"I bet the twins don't make it." Tonks joked, looking out the window and across the platform as the five minute warning whistle blew.

"They'll make it." Daphne said from the seat across from Tonks.

"What happens if they don't?" Hermione asked wearily.

"They don't come to school this year?" Hannah suggested.

"I think that's why Filch is a squib." Blaise suggested conspiratorially.

"They wouldn't strip someone of their magic for missing the train." Susan said rolling her eyes.

"If I were them I would arrange an extremely risky side-along apparition directly onto the moving train and hope that I don't die in the process." Harry boasted.

"There they are." Tonks said pointed as the Weasley family came stumbling through the barrier, all running.

HPCOC

The train started to pull away just after Percy and Ron got on board. Ginny pushed their trolley to keep speed with the train while the twins worked together to get the trunks onto the train, where Ron and Percy moved them out of the way. It was all very efficient and before Ginny even had to start jogging she found herself picked up and tossed onto the train by the twins, who jumped on moments later. Panting Fred looked at his twin. "Do you think we can cut it closer next year?"

"Don't even joke about that." Percy bristled.

"Come on Ginny." George said helping his little sister to her feet.

"We'll help you with your trunk." Fred offered.

"And maybe help you find a compartment." George smiled.

"Thank you, but that doesn't mean you're forgiven for earlier." Ginny graciously accepted their help.

"Oh come on Ginny." Ron moaned.

"If you hadn't yelled then Mum wouldn't have wrongfully yelled at them and we wouldn't have been late." Percy informed her. "This is over. I don't want to have to take points from Gryffindor over this."

"I'm gonna go find the guys." Ron grumbled and dragged his trunk off.

"I need to get to the Prefect meeting." Percy said arrogantly. "I'm going to trust you two to get Ginny settled. Don't let me down."

"Like we care about what you think." Fred rolled his eyes.

"Come on Gin." George took his trunk by the handle and started dragging it down the train.

"I think I heard Tonks shouting to us as we were running." Fred said. "Somewhere this way."

"Wait up!" Ginny called as she struggled with her own trunk.

A few minutes later they found the compartment with the rest of the court and threw the door open. All of their friends burst into applause. Harry stood up grinning. "Well done you two."

"Very Indiana Jones." Hermione said approvingly. "Although being on time would be better."

"Who is Indiana Jones?" Fred asked raising an eyebrow.

"Oh, right." Hermione blushed slightly. "Muggle reference, forget I said anything."

"Well come on in and make yourselves comfortable." Harry said jovially, waving them in. It was only then that he saw the large brown eyes peaking out from behind George. "Oh, hey Ginny. I didn't see you there."

George moved to the side as Ginny eyes went wide when Harry smiled at her. Her eyes met Harry's briefly before she blushed deeply and ran out of the compartment. The twins looked at each other for a moment before Fred shrugged. "I guess she doesn't want our help finding a compartment of her own."

"I think you're correct brother." George answered and sat down next to Susan. "And if she does she can just come back."

"Hello Harry Potter, I heard that I just missed you at Flourish and Blotts by a few minutes." Luna said appearing in the still open doorway. "Fred and George Weasley, Harry's friends. How are you all doing today?"

"Hey Luna," Harry greeted as she walked in. "How are you?"

"Oh, I'm wonderful." She said smiling directly at Harry, making Tonks and Hermione, who were sitting on either side of him, stiffen slightly. "I've been looking forward to today all summer."

"Your first time on the train is always exciting." Harry nodded amicably.

"Oh, it's not that." Luna smiled, then leaned forward and smelled him, she didn't notice the death glares coming from the girls when she stood back up. "I thought so."

"Um, personal space Luna." Harry said awkwardly. "And do I smell bad or something?"

"You smell wonderful Harry." Luna said absentmindedly as she sniffed everyone else in the compartment.

"Could you tell us what's going on?" Tonks glared. "Or are you just going to keep being creepy?"

"Tonks!" Daphne teased. "That was rude."

"Well, it's not my fault she's being creepy!" Tonks threw her hands up in exasperation, Hermione, Susan and Hannah all nodded in agreement.

Luna smiled serenely and held her hands up to her face so that her index fingers were touching her thumbs, circling her eyes, and the other three fingers on each hand were framing her face. The whole effect was similar to a Halloween mask. Suddenly her eyes started glowing gold and she looked around the compartment once again before her eyes came to rest on Harry. "How fascinating. None of you have the trace."

"And you have mage smell?" Harry asked incredulously.

"Oh, yes." Luna nodded vigorously hands still over her face. "It is surprisingly useful."

"I'm sure it is." Tonks drawled sarcastically making the other girls smirk.

"Don't mind them Luna. It is a very..." Harry paused as he tried to find a good word. "um, unique talent."

Luna beamed and continued staring at him but didn't say anything. Normally silent staring is unsettling, but when the starer has glowing eyes it is dramatically more so. It only took a few seconds for Harry's resolve to fail. "Why are you staring at me?"

"Oh, am I?" Luna asked, smiling innocently. "It's just that your aura is the most magnificent thing I have ever seen. You can look at mine if you want to."

"OKAY!" Susan shouted as Tonks went for her wand. "Luna, it was nice seeing you but you really need to leave."

"Right now." Hannah nodded.

"But-" Luna frowned.

"OUT!" Hermione interjected sternly, while pointing to the door.

"I'm sure you can commiserate with Ginny." Fred suggested helpfully.

"She went to the right if you didn't see her when you were coming in." George informed her.

"Um, okay." Luna was still obviously confused but didn't argue. Once she got to the door she turned back to the compartment. "Did I say something?"

"Yes!" Daphne said and slammed the compartment door in her face. "Seriously, can you believe the nerve of that girl?"

"At least with her gone we can move on to the important matter at hand." Blaise said calmly.

"Oh? And what's that?" Harry asked intrigued.

"Well, a magical anomaly has recently occurred and requires in depth investigation." Blaise smiled coyly. "Fred, George, just how is it that two Gryffindors managed to use the word 'commiserate' correctly?"

"Hey, we've read books!" Fred cried indignantly as the others started to laugh.

"At least two." George agreed.

"It's kind of hard to remember." Fred admitted.

"That was a long time ago." George said somberly.

"What were we? Seven?" Fred asked turning to George.

"I think, I'm just glad that we're twins so we only had to read half as many as we claimed." George agreed with a nod.

"See! We're smart!" Fred thumped his chest proudly with his fist eliciting a new bout of laughter.

"Hey Potter!" Theodore Nott threw the door of the compartment open. "Things are going to be different this year!"

"Um, yeah." Harry nodded lamely. "Things are different every year. New curriculum, new DADA teacher and new first years."

"No, you idiot." Pansy said from behind Nott while Tracy rolled her eyes. "You're not going to get away with everything this year."

"I didn't get away with everything last year." Harry countered to the growing frustration of the Slytherin Trio.

"Just shut up Potter!" Nott growled. "My father got me the best tutors. You'd better watch your back."

"Why? You too scared to attack my front?" Harry smirked.

"Snakes aren't known for their bravery." A voice drawled from the corridor behind Nott, Pansy and Tracy.

"No one asked you Draco!" Pansy sneered at her former crush.

"I want to hear Draco's opinion!" Tonks called out merrily.

"Daphne, Blaise. You should stop hanging out with this riffraff." Theodore said, ignoring Tonks and Draco. "Big things are going to be happening in Slytherin this year and those allied with outsiders won't be looked upon in the best light."

"What's happening in Slytherin?" Harry asked leaning forward suspiciously.

"That's not for a Ravenclaw to know." Nott said and turned on his heel. "Don't say I didn't warn you. Get out of my way Malfoy."

"Gladly Nott." Draco said as he stepped to the side while the Slytherins pushed passed. Pansy shot him a look of pure loathing but Tracy merely nodded to him indifferently.

"Don't worry Harry. Blaise and I will keep an eye on things." Daphne said reassuringly.

"If they let you find anything out that is." Harry said quietly. "He did have a point. It would be very easy for them to feed you misleading information. I hope Hande doesn't mind spending another year in the dungeons."

"Hande?" Draco asked as he came into the compartment completely.

"My snake." Harry shrugged. "Parselmouth blah blah dark wizard stigma blah blah."

"I see." Draco replied evenly.

"So how was your summer?" Harry asked, changing the subject, then winced when he remembered what the subject meant to Draco.

"Not as bad as I was expecting actually." Draco smiled. "Father actually seems to have gotten passed his problems with me being in Gryffindor. He's even lent me an aid to help gain reputation within the house. I can't wait to try out some of its suggestions."

"Do I even want to know?" Harry sighed.

"Probably, but I've been sworn to secrecy. My dad would get in a lot of trouble if certain people found out that he gave me this item." Draco's smile turned cunning.

Harry could tell that Draco was trying to wind him up, whether or not it was really a secret Harry wasn't going to fall for the bait. "Oh, that's nice."

Draco frowned but didn't say anything more on the subject. Draco hung out with the court for most of an hour before he decided to make his way back to the other Gryffindors. Just as he was starting to stand up the train jostled on the track and knocked him off balance. He fell across the twins and the Hufflepuffs before they all fell to the floor.

"That was very poised Draco." Hermione teased from her seat.

"Shut up Granger." Draco moaned and the five fallen friends started pulling themselves to their feet. "Everyone okay?"

"Yea." Susan groaned while Hannah nodded.

Draco stood up and patted himself down. "Hey, did anyone see where my wand went?"

"Here it is." Harry called from under the seat a few minutes later. He had no idea how the wand managed to make it that far until he saw the note wrapped around it. Harry took the note with a small smile to himself and read it. Go to the bathroom. It was signed with a tiny lightning bolt.

Short simple and to the point. There was no reason for Harry to ignore the summon from himself so once everyone was sorted out and Draco left Harry excused himself to the bathroom. When he got there he found Draco's wand, a potion, still warm from the cauldron along with a recipe card, and a note.

Harry,

This potion takes long enough to brew that by the time it is done you won't have time to apply it. Start that first, then you have a prank to set up. You'll know what to do.

Harry smiled and picked up the items. He took a glance at the recipe and once he saw what potion it was he knew what he was going to do. The hardest part would be switching Draco's wand a few minutes ago. A moment later Harry warped out of the bathroom.

A version of Harry that was six hours older dispelled the disillusionment charm on himself and made his way back to his compartment. He was correct in thinking that switching the wands would be the hardest bit. It was really a good thing that the train hit what ever the train hit. Harry settled back down between Hermione and Tonks and spent the rest of the train ride looking forward to the opening feast for entirely different reasons than the rest of the student body.

AN:

I think I know what I'm having for breakfast on monday.

I very much like readers who point out my typos. Thank you Impact81 and All The Pretty Horses. I suppose there is a possibility that someone else will point it out between now and when the actual site updates, so thanks to said hypothetical, potentially real, person or persons.

"Twins, Blaise?" Harry called as the train came to a stop in Hogsmeade. "What do you guys think of a boys only carriage?"

"Can we race the girls?" George asked with a smile.

"Five galleons says our thestral is faster." Fred boasted.

"You're on!" Tonks shot back. "What's a thestral?"

"Invisible winged horses. Think pegasus if pegasi were horse-vulture mix rather than horse-eagle." Harry said offhandedly. "There is a herd that lives in the forest. Hagrid tamed them and now uses them several times a year to haul students."

"Oh," Tonks smiled. "You're still on."

"Sounds good. Men, go catch us two carriages." Harry said to the twins and Blaise. "I need a word with our competition."

"Sir!" The twins saluted mockingly and left the compartment with a chuckling Blaise right behind.

Harry closed the door and turned to face the girls, smile dropping. "Now then, you're all guilty to different extents but you all treated Luna very poorly. None of you did anything too bad and she did make several severe mistakes, so a simple 'I'm sorry' should suffice."

"Why should we apologize? She's the one that smelled us!" Hannah asked affronted.

"And what kind of excuse is 'smelling magic'?" Susan asked rolling her eyes. "Like that could be true."

"Just because you can't do something is no reason to say that no one else can." Harry shook his head. "Need I remind you that I am the only one in this compartment who can speak with snakes?"

"No, but that is entirely different." Susan countered.

"How so?" Harry raised an eyebrow.

"Everyone has heard of parselmouths, I've never heard of someone smelling magic before." Susan crossed her arms.

"No one ever heard of anyone surviving the AK until me. That is no reason to say it didn't happen." Harry returned.

"Well..." Susan trailed off looking for another argument.

"If you're so concerned about this why didn't you say something while Luna was here." Hannah jumped in. "You could have told her to stay."

"I've been in that spot, I would rather be told that I wasn't wanted around and left than feel obliged to stay somewhere that I felt unwelcome, because one person in the group wants me there." Harry said distantly. "When you leave you can calm down and complain to people. If you're trapped there you're just stuck feeling helpless trying not to make the people who don't want you there want you there more, or at least not make them want them there less. It is very stressful."

"Hey you six, you need to get off the train now." The sixth year Hufflepuff prefect said as he stuck his head in the door.

"We were in the middle of a conversation." Daphne said shortly.

"That's nice, but you'll miss the carriages if you don't go now." The Hufflepuff said calmly.

"Two are being held for us." Daphne replied.

"Look, I want to go up to the castle and eat like every other student who isn't one of you six." The Hufflepuff crossed his arms. "If your conversation is that important you can take it up after the feast, but I'm not leaving this compartment until all of you are out."

Daphne and the prefect glared at each other for a few seconds before Hermione pulled on Daphne's arm. "Leave it Daph, Harry's right, let's just go eat."

The smug prefect ushered them all out of the train and onto the platform. The group was stopped though, much to the prefect's

consternation. Hagrid bellowed to Harry from where he was helping the last of the first years along the path to the lake.

"Arry!" Hagrid beamed as Harry made his way over. "Good to see you. I know that you don't have a lot of time right now but tomorrow evening Professor Kettleburn is stopping by to go over what he will be using for class, he asked that you attend."

"Really? That's strange." Harry shrugged. "Thanks for letting me know Hagrid."

"Hurry up!" The Hufflepuff called from behind him.

"Oh my, I'd better get back to the first years!" Hagrid said and hurried off.

"Bye Hagrid." Harry called as he made his way back to the group. He paused next to the thestral who would be pulling his carriage. "If you fly us up there I'll get raw meat for the whole herd." He told the remarkably intelligent animal quietly before turning to the prefect, who was watching him cautiously. "Would you like to ride with us?"

"Fine." The prefect said shortly, climbing into their carriage. "Let's just go!"

The twins shot Harry angry glares before following the enemy. Blaise looked confused but was satisfied with Harry's smirk. Blaise was the only one who noticed Harry draw his wand and quickly cast sticking charms on the seats and a strong featherlight charm on the carriage itself.

HPCOC

"Where is he?" The Mayor of Hogsmeade asked Flitwick as the last of the carriages were pulling up to the school.

"I'm not sure." Flitwick said just as a terrified scream cut through the evening.

Both men started running down the lawn looking for trouble. All too soon they saw a thestral drawn carriage fly over the hill at least fifty feet in the air and climbing. Suddenly the thestral went into a steep dive and pulled level with the ground before climbing again. As it got

closer Flitwick and the mayor could hear the sound of three boys laughing behind the more prominent scream.

"Don't fly! Don't fly! Don't fly!" A panicked, pleading voice was the only warning they had before a second carriage broke over the top of the hill, still on the ground but the thestral was running, forcing the girls to hold on or risk flying out. Flitwick could just barely tell that it was Hermione doing the pleading as they passed him.

"I suspect Mr. Potter is in the carriage that is flying right now." Flitwick said as he turned and started hurrying back to the castle. "Probably one of the ones who is laughing."

HPCOC

"Must not be much of a Quidditch player." Harry observed sadly as he watched the crying prefect flee the carriage. Harry turned back to the others, the twins were laughing merely and Blaise was chuckling nervously, like that was the only thing keeping him from panicking too.

"OY! POTTER!" Tonks shouted as their carriage pulled up. "Next time I'm riding with you!"

"Why do you think I had anything to do with that?" Harry asked innocently, drawing laughter from all who weren't too terrified to laugh. "What?"

"If you ever do that again, without warning me, I'll never speak to you again." Blaise said, getting out of the carriage shakily.

"Oh it wasn't that bad." Harry scoffed.

"You didn't think you were about to die." Blaise replied tersely.

"You were never in any real danger." Harry shrugged. "Less than if you were riding a broom actually."

"There is a big difference between was is and what feels like it is." Blaise glared.

"Sorry." Harry said quickly. "Let's get inside."

"MR. POTTER!" Harry turned from the castle and saw Flitwick and a man he didn't know running towards them.

"WHY DO YOU ASSUME IT WAS ME?" Harry yelled back.

"It was you." Hermione scolded.

"That's beside the point." Harry said. "And the thestral did all the work, and made the choice to fly at all."

"Uh-huh." Susan said crossing her arms.

"All I did was bribe the wonderful creature." Harry defended. "Bribing animals isn't against rules or morals, right?"

"Mr...Potter...Stay...Here." Flitwick panted as he approached. "The rest...go."

"But Sir, I just-" Harry stopped when Flitwick held up a hand.

"Not..in..trouble." Flitwick gasped. Harry shrugged and waved the rest of the court on. He stood patiently waiting for Flitwick to be able to speak easily again. "Mr. Potter. This is Sigwald Flume, he is the mayor of Hogsmeade."

"Nice to meet you Mr. Flume." Harry said shaking his hand.
"Flume...doesn't a Flume run Honeydukes?"

"Yes, that is my younger brother, Ambrosius, and his wife." Sigwald smiled.

"So what can I do for you today Mr. Flume?" Harry asked cheerily.

"Well, after your generous donation we were able to repair all of the damage to the village in record time." Flume began. "Not that there was all that much really, but we're having a celebration anyway. The whole village unanimously decided to delay until September and invite you as a guest of honor."

"Wow, I'm honored sir." Harry said graciously. "I would love to be there but I don't know if the Headmaster will let me. I'm not allowed off the grounds until next year you see."

"Oh, that is no problem." Flume smiled. "I have already spoken with him about it. All you need is to get permission from your Godfather."

"Well, I'll ask." Harry decided. "Can I bring guests?"

"Of course, but they'll have to get permission as well." Flume grinned in relief.

"Harry, we need to get inside." Flitwick said checking his watch.

Flume shook Harry's hand again. "Whether or not you can attend we'll be holding it on the third Saturday this month. I hope to see you there."

"I hope to be there." Harry smiled.

"It was nice meeting you."

"You as well." Harry said before turning and heading inside.

"Creevy, Colin." McGonagall was calling out as Harry walked into the Great Hall.

"NOOOOOOO!" Harry cried falling to his knees while tilting his head back so his shout was directed at the ceiling.

"Harry! What's wrong?" Flitwick asked worriedly as the entire student body and all the teachers had their attention redirected.

"I MISSED THE SONG!" He sobbed over dramatically, throwing a wrist up against his forehead while students started laughing.

"I told you someone likes my songs Albus." The hat boasted smugly before turning to Harry. "Would you like me to sing it again?"

"No!" McGonagall shouted before backpedaling hastily. "I mean, we're in the middle of the sorting. I'm sure we can arrange a private performance Mr. Potter. But for now just go sit down and try to behave yourself."

"Oh, no worries." Harry smiled reassuringly. "I'm all done causing mayhem for today."

Harry made his way to his table, Hermione and Tonks had saved him a seat, thinking about the mayhem that he already caused and wasn't yet known. The potion is the first, and only, known potion that has a time delay function that is based on the ambient time rather than how long the potion has existed. The timer was set to go off just before the end of the feast, or at least when the feast normally ends, just in time for Dumbledore's speech.

Snape's seat was right there while Harry was applying the potion to the floor under the table. That was the first time he used Malfoy's wand. One password charm would pass from the cushion to Snape when he sat down. After that it was all hoping that someone said the password in Snape's presence. Considering that Harry set the password to 'prior incantato' Snape would probably say it himself.

It was good that this prank wasn't within Harry's normal style, it would make it easier to frame Malfoy. A quick timed charm and one tricky event triggered charm later Harry had cast a spell that was designed to wipe the previous spells' residue out of your wand, thereby making it impossible to prove what spells you cast. Harry intentionally miscast it though. That should be fun. He thought with a smirk.

"What was that about?" Hermione asked as he sat down between her and Tonks, bringing him out of his thoughts.

"Oh, the village is throwing a party and wants me to be there." Harry shrugged. "I would like both of you to come with me if your parents agree."

"Party, for what?" Tonks asked as the sorting proceeded, ignored by the three of them.

"Rebuilding the town." Harry smiled. "I imagine they had a bit left over from the corpse."

"Lovegood, Luna" McGonagall's voice cut through their conversation and all three turned to regard the girl.

Luna looked around as she walked forward and caught Harry's eye. She smiled at him serenely as she sat down and put the hat on her head. She only sat there for a few moments before the hat placed her in Ravenclaw. Harry grinned at her as she took the hat off and

when he was sure she was looking at him he nodded pointedly to the empty seat across from him. Harry noticed the girls stiffen slightly while they applauded Luna politely.

"Hello again Harry." Luna smiled as she sat down.

"Hey Luna." Harry returned the smile the subtly jabbed Hermione and Tonks in the ribs with his elbows.

"Um, look Luna." Hermione hesitated. "We may have over reacted on the train. We're sorry."

"It's okay. People misunderstand me all the time." Luna waved it off.

"Just try to ask people before you smell them?" Tonks asked hopefully. "It is a bit too personal for first impressions."

"But Daddy said that if I wanted to make friends I had to be personal immediately." Luna tilted her head to the side.

"Erm," Hermione ventured. "Are you sure he didn't say 'personable'?"

"Maybe, what is the difference?" Luna turned her large eyes on Hermione.

"Personal is, well, the details that make each person unique I guess. Generally personal issues are kept between friends and family." Hermione explained. "Personable is when you're good at interacting with people, you know, friendly, warm, inviting, easy to talk to."

"Oh, well that does make more sense." Luna nodded sagely. "How do I do that?"

"Practice." Harry replied flatly. "A lot of practice."

"Will you help?" Luna asked wide-eyed.

"We'd love to." Harry said before either of the girls could respond. "Right girls?"

"Um, right." Hermione agreed. "What are friends for, right?"

"Just don't sniff me." Tonks added, Hermione nodded.

"Thank you!" Luna bounced in her seat.

"Weasley, Ginevra" McGonagall called out and rolled up her parchment.

Ginny sat with the hat on her head for more time than any other student this year. Finally the hat came to a decision.
"RAVENCLAW!"

As Ginny hurried over to the table, whispering could be heard amongst the clapping. No one was expecting her to not join Gryffindor and her brothers. Harry watched, stunned, as she found a spot with the other first year Ravenclaws. Once she sat down she looked down the table and looked at Harry before blushing and turning away quickly.

Great! Harry thought. She followed me. I wonder how Slytherin she is. Harry sighed. I'll have to sweep her things for the diary again.

"Welcome back to Hogwart's." Dumbledore said while McGonagall took the hat and stool away. With a resigned sigh he started the feast. "Time to eat."

Luna's conversation with Harry and the girls carried on through the meal. They transitioned from etiquette to study habits to the classes themselves and were just starting to give advice about individual professors when a voice came from behind Harry, making him cringe involuntarily. "Harry my boy, how nice to see you!"

Harry turned in his seat to see Lockhart standing a few feet away grinning that horrid grin of his. Harry noticed immediately that Lockhart was holding his hand out to be shaken and was standing too far away for this to happen without Harry standing up first. Harry groaned quietly and stood up, shaking Lockhart's hand. "Professor Lockhart."

"Professor Flitwick tells me that you're already being invited to public events." Lockhart kept his grip on Harry's hand and looked him straight in the eye. "If you ever need help dealing with the public, feel free to ask." Lockhart laughed arrogantly. "I have a little experience in that arena, if you know what I mean."

"Err.." Harry wrenched his hand out of Lockhart's grip. "I'll be sure to keep that in mind."

"Make sure that you do, Harry." Lockhart smiled again.

"Right," Harry shrugged. "Excuse me but I don't think the meal is going-"

Harry got cut off by a loud clattering noise from the head table. Harry's potion had gone off. For the entire meal the potion that he applied to Dumbledore's flatware was now all over his hands, and similarly the potion on the floor was now all over the soles of his shoes. Almost undetectable in its original form the potion turned into an incredibly slick substance. The noise was caused by the mess made while Dumbledore attempted to keep hold of his goblet. A few seconds after the commotion started, and with all eyes now firmly planted on Dumbledore, large red letters appeared above him:

'FUMBLEDORE . . .'

If Dumbledore had looked up and noticed this message he would have suspected that this was only the beginning. As it was he reacted before he could be warned and drew his wand to try and free himself of the potion. The Elder Wand wasn't likely to fall victim to a lowly prank like this and Dumbledore was able to keep his grasp on it.

With a quick wave of his wand Dumbledore dealt with the potion and a smile lit his face. Chuckling slightly he started to stand up. The potion on his feet was not nullified and Dumbledore immediately started falling. He windmilled his arms wildly, knocking over a pitcher of pumpkin juice in the process, before stepping on the hem of his robe and falling across McGonagall and coming to rest with his face in a bowl of mashed potatoes.

"STUMBLES MORE!" Gold letters appeared under the red ones as the student body's laughter reached cacophonous levels. As Dumbledore cleaned himself up the third and final line of text appeared above him. "Love, DM"

At the Gryffindor table one second year stopped laughing. Draco got more nervous as one by one each Professor was reading the

message and drawing the obvious conclusion. Once the head table had been checked for any further contamination by potion Dumbledore, Snape and McGonagall all stood and looked at Draco pointedly.

Draco just watched as they approached, too panicked to even run. The laughter died down as the whole mass of students found solidarity in their desire to hear what was coming. When the professors were only a few feet away Draco's brain finally managed to send a signal. "I didn't do that."

"I'm sure, Mr. Malfoy." McGonagall said skeptically.

"No really." Draco stammered. "Why would I sign it?"

"For the attention." Snape sneered. "Obviously."

"I swear I didn't." Draco plead.

"There is a simple spell that I'm sure we can use to know for sure." Dumbledore said sadly. "It shows all of the most recent spells cast with a wand. Draco, do you mind if we check your wand for the charms that would be needed for those words?"

"Of course sir." Draco said relieved as he drew his wand. "It has been with me all day."

"Prior Incantato!" Dumbledore incanted touching the tip of his wand to Draco's. As the last syllable was completed there was a loud crack and a column of pink smoke surrounded Snape. It cleared after a moment to reveal Professor Snape with a head full of daffodils instead of hair. Snape's anger grew at the same rate as the mirth of the rest of the school.

Everyone who could see turned back to the wands just as the first spell was appearing. Draco frowned in confusion at seeing the miscast spell, and by the time they had progressed back to the first spell Harry had cast during his prep, Draco was certain that his time in Hogwart's was over. Dumbledore didn't allow any emotion to show through as he addressed the boy. "My office after I dismiss the rest."

"Yes, sir." Draco nodded meekly.

Across the hall Harry was silently gloating to himself. "Well, it was nice talking to you Professor, but I want to get some dessert before it is time to go to bed."

"What?" Lockhart asked absentmindedly, still shocked. "Oh, yes of course. I'll see you in class Harry."

Harry sat back down while Lockhart walked away. The end of the meal came rapidly and quietly, then Dumbledore gave his speech with less enthusiasm than normal. Finally the headmaster dismissed all of the students back to the respective dorms and motioned for Draco to go with him.

"You two go ahead." Harry said motioning Hermione and Tonks on. "I want to go talk to Draco once he's done with Dumbledore."

"Okay, we'll see you in a few minutes." Tonks smiled. "Congratulate him on a job well done for me won't you?"

"And scold him for me for how many rules that broke and how much it could have hurt Professor Dumbledore." Hermione crossed her arms. "The headmaster is over one hundred years old. If he had fallen somewhere other than on Professor McGonagall, he could have really been hurt."

"I'll tell him. Don't worry." Harry reassured with a smile and a wave before turning away from the group of Ravenclaws.

Fifteen minutes later the gargoyle in front of the headmaster's office moved out of the way and Draco trudged out. He wearily looked at Harry. "What do you want Potter?"

"Just wanted to come offer my condolences. How bad was it?" Harry said, quietly falling into step with Draco as they made their way towards Gryffindor tower.

"One hundred and fifty points from Gryffindor and a weeks detention with Filch." Draco groaned burying his face in his hands.

"I didn't even do it. I was set up!" Draco sighed after a few minutes of silent walking, they were very close to the Fat Lady now.

"I know you were." Harry nodded.

"How do you know that?" Draco scoffed. "What reason could you have to believe me that no one else does?"

"Oh." Harry laughed and turned to face him. "I'm the one who set you up."

"WHAT!" Draco shouted. "Why would you do that to me?"

"For you Draco," Harry explained matter-of-fact-ly. "And you're welcome."

"I'm welcome?" Draco gasped. "You didn't do anything to deserve thanks!"

"Didn't I?" Harry smirked.

"No!" Draco jabbed Harry in the chest with one finger. "I'm going to go back to Dumbledore and turn you in!"

"Draco, Draco, Draco." Harry put a hand on Draco's shoulder and shook his head. "Why would they ever believe that? Besides I can almost guarantee that you won't want to turn me in in the morning."

"Why would I possibly want that?" Draco raised an eyebrow.

"Just go to your tower and see for yourself." Harry gave him a gentle shove in the right direction.

"And if I still want to turn you in in the morning?" Draco asked cautiously.

"Then I'll admit to everything." Harry replied confidently.

"Okay, I'll follow your lead." Draco muttered before quickly adding "This one time!"

"You won't regret it." Harry said as he turned and stalked off. Harry secretly followed Draco the rest of the way to the common room and couldn't help but smile when he heard the deafening applause roll out from inside as soon as Draco gave the Fat Lady the password.

Harry made his way back to Ravenclaw tower thinking about the promising progress he was making in Project Draco.

HPCOC

Oh Tom,

Today, when Harry looked into my eyes, I could feel a connection form. I know he could feel it too. I just know all my plans for Harry will work out.

AN:

I am still having trouble deciding who exactly got pranked. Was Dumbledore the target, or was he just the set up to target Draco? Are there more options? Could the scene have been written better? Probably, I was having trouble with this chapter.

WHERE THE HELL IS IT? Harry screamed mentally as he waved his ineffectual horcrux detector around. It gave a small indication towards London, and therefore towards Gringotts and Hufflepuff's cup, and a stronger indication towards the continent where Harry had three stored, but nothing close by. What if Lucius didn't even send it here? Then it would be near one of the others to not give a separate signal. Most likely in London somewhere, maybe he just dumped it in Flourish and Blotts for anyone to pick up.

No, I would have found it when people were leaving then, unless he gave it to an employee. They usually take the floo. Harry paled as a new thought struck him as he opened the curtains on his bed. It could be hiding its nature somehow. That would be difficult, seeing as how I can detect the cup through all of Gringott's wards. They would be horrified if they found out that I made something that could detect anything through those wards. So what's stronger than Gringott's?

Harry put the detector back in its case in his trunk and laid on his back, staring at the canopy. Hogwart's is hypothetically, but any interference from the castle would probably stop me from detecting the others as well. What else is there? Charms? Wards? Fidelius? Something I never came across in my old life? DAMN IT! Harry sat up then turned quickly and punched his headboard as hard as he could.

"What was that?" Terry asked dazed as he woke up from the noise.

"Sorry guys, bad dream. Go back to sleep." Harry called from inside his curtains.

"Are you alright?" Anthony asked from the other side. "That sounded like it hurt?"

"I'm fine." Harry said dully. "I'm sure it sounded worse than it was."

"Alright, well, g'night then." Terry mumbled as a rustling sound came from his bed. Anthony follow suit quickly.

And now I can't even grumble to myself. Harry thought miserably as he laid back down. Alright, so what am I going to do now? Harry was still thinking when sleep claimed him.

HPCOC

Harry watched in amusement the next morning as Percy Weasley stood solidly against the masses as he glared disapprovingly at them all during breakfast. With the exception of Percy no one in the whole house looked like they got much sleep and most had only started arriving during the last half hour. When there was only then minutes left the Twins entered carrying Draco, one of his arms over each of their shoulders. His head hung forward limply and swayed back and forth with the motion of the Twins, which was fortunately not enough to knock the paper crown off his head.

All of the Gryffindors, except Percy, broke into tired applause when they saw him. Draco took this opportunity to prove that he was still alive and meekly lifted one hand halfway before dropping it again. Fred and George dropped Draco in a seat and took up the seats on either side of him before proceeding to force him to drink several cups of coffee and eat some toast.

McGonagall approached the three to give them their schedules while barely restraining her look of dissatisfaction from her student. Draco looked at her for a few moments before dropping it in horror and burying his face in his hands. One of the Twins, Harry couldn't tell from the distance, picked up the schedule, blanched and patted Draco mournfully on the shoulder.

"Looks like there is something bad on there." Harry observed the obvious.

"First class for us today is double potions with Gryffindor." Daphne said from next to Blaise, across the table from Harry, Hermione and Tonks, and two down from Susan and Hannah.

"Oh, that's not good at all." Harry sighed shaking his head. "Do you think someone will be willing to send him to the hospital before hand?"

"What?" Hermione asked shocked. "Why would you want him to get hurt?"

"Because Snape will do so much more." Tonks said flatly, Hannah nodded in agreement.

"The problem is that whomever did it would become the focus of Snape's wrath." Blaise shuddered. "Not many people would be willing to bite that bullet."

"Wouldn't Snape be happy about him getting hurt?" Hermione asked.
"Wouldn't he congratulate the attacker?"

"Hermione, have you ever stolen a chew toy from a large angry dog?" Susan asked raising an eyebrow.

"Um, no." Hermione said timidly while putting her hands in her lap.

"They'll maul you." Hannah supplied. "Big surprise huh? And before you say it, being a human does not make Snape better than a large angry dog."

Hermione was indeed about to say that and closed her mouth with an audible click. It didn't stop her for long. "Well, we can't just do nothing."

"He could hurt himself I guess." Daphne thought out loud. "It would have to be something big though, like falling down stairs or something."

"Or I could be the attacker." Harry mused. "Snape already hates me, and I could even do it without hurting anyone by just stunning him if I incant in parseltongue."

"Are you sure you want everyone to know you are a parselmouth?" Daphne asked concerned. "Especially if you attack someone with it first."

"Good point." Harry admitted. "I guess I'll just do it without getting caught then. If you'll excuse me I have to find a place."

"Don't forget to leave enough time to put clothes on before class." Hermione reminded as he got up.

"No worries dear." Harry smirked. "I have more than enough time."

HPCOC

"Madam Pomfrey!" Ron called as he and Neville carried Draco in.

"What happened?" The nurse questioned as she hustled out of her office drawing her wand.

"We don't know. We were just on our way to class when a red light came out of nowhere and hit Draco." Neville explained.

"Red light?" Pomfrey repeated. "Enervate!"

"Um, I don't think anything happened." Ron said after the three stared at Draco for a couple seconds.

"Well, sometimes it takes a little while." Madam Pomfrey said hopefully as she cast a couple diagnostics. "Maybe a different language." She muttered when she saw the results. "You two run along, I'll send Draco to class as soon as I can."

As the two boys were leaving Madam Pomfrey walked into her office and floo'd the headmaster. "Albus, Draco has been stunned and I can't undo it."

"Alright Poppy." Dumbledore's voice sounded like he really would rather not help. "I'll be there shortly."

HPCOC

"How'd it go?" Susan asked as Harry caught up with the Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs on their way to Herbology.

"Good, only Ron and Neville were around." Harry smiled, still breathing heavily. "And neither of them saw me."

"Whoa, minty." Hannah commented on Harry's breath.

"Yea, parselmagic always makes my stomach feel a little strange so I stopped by the kitchen and got some mint leaves to chew on." Harry exhaled a cloud of minty breath all over the girls.

"Really? Why?" Hermione asked curiously.

"All foreign incantations do that for whatever reason." Harry shrugged. "I'm sure it's written down somewhere but I don't know specifically. "Too many in too short of time and you heave."

"Eww." Hannah said wrinkling her nose.

"That's why most people don't learn." Harry said matter-of-fact-ly.
"It's just about worthless in a fight."

"So, how do you think Snape is taking it?" Tonks asked worriedly.
"He's probably on the war path."

"We'll check with our snakes at lunch, see how he treated the Gryffindors." Harry said quietly. "But it is probably bad."

"Why didn't you stun Snape instead?" Hermione asked innocently.
"Save the whole class from the treatment."

"Why didn't you think of that while we were brainstorming?" Harry replied throwing his hands up in the air. "That would have worked so much better."

"Sorry." Hermione blushed.

"It's okay."

HPCOC

"That was the last language I know." Dumbledore shook his head in resignation, voice scratchy from the effort. "If he doesn't wake up by tonight I'll floo Barty Crouch. He knows just about every language that I don't."

Madam Pomfrey handed him a potion and a steaming cup of tea. Dumbledore reached for the tea but the nurse put the potion in his hand first. "You've been trying for two hours Albus. The potions will keep your vocal cords from inflaming and will prevent you from losing your voice later."

"And the tea?"

"I assumed you were thirsty." Poppy said with a smile.

"Ungh." A weary voice came from the bed. "Where am I?"

"Mr. Malfoy!" Poppy exclaimed and quickly started casting diagnostics.

"You're in the hospital wing Mr. Malfoy." Albus said just before downing his potion and scrunching up his face in disgust. "You were attacked on your way to class this morning?"

"Really? What did they use?" Draco asked more wakefully than he had done anything else all day.

"It was just a simple stunner." Pomfrey said. "Normally you wouldn't have even missed class but we still don't know what language was used. How do you feel?"

"Better than I did at breakfast." Draco answered frankly. "So I missed class?"

"Yes." Dumbledore said checking the time. "In fact, I think it ended just as you were waking up."

"So, someone attacked me with a relatively harmless spell that made me miss Potions class, and only Potions class, while also allowing me a few hours rest?" Draco summed up. "Who do I say thanks to?"

"The only witnesses only report the spell light." Poppy said with a shrug.

"We have our suspicions though." Dumbledore assured him.

"We do?" Poppy asked surprised.

"The usual." Dumbledore sighed.

"I don't think either of the Weasley twins did this." Poppy replied cynically. "Neither Molly nor Arthur would teach them a second language."

"Well, anyway, if it is okay with you I'd like to go get something to eat." Draco interrupted staring at the clock.

"What?" Poppy started. "Oh, yes of course Mr. Malfoy, you're free to go."

HPCOC

"So how bad was it?" Susan asked as Daphne and Blaise joined the others at the Hufflepuff table.

"Oh, it could have been worse." Daphne said as she sat down. "He spent a lot of time at the beginning of class talking about the ways in which he would make Draco suffer, it only got worse when Draco, Weasley and Longbottom didn't show up by the start of class."

"When those two showed up and told Snape that Draco was in the hospital wing and wouldn't wake up Snape looked like he was torn between glee and even more anger." Blaise added. "I think he decided to withhold his opinion on the matter until he knows how long it will last."

"Well," Harry looked at his watch. "Draco should be awake by now."

Sure enough within a couple of minutes Draco walked into the Great Hall. Still tired after his forced two hour nap Draco staggered over to the his table and took a seat. Harry could tell that Draco was immediately bombarded with questions about who stunned him. Harry didn't bother to watch how he reacted but instead looked to the head table.

Snape had clearly noted Draco's entrance and came to the obvious conclusion that Draco had managed to only miss his class. Snape's attempts to strangle his fork lead Harry to the conclusion that Snape was upset about it. The fact that he was reaching a shade of purple that Harry had only seen from Vernon before, and that his face was frozen in a fierce snarl, helped.

"Mr. Potter." Dumbledore said from behind Harry, making the boy jump slightly.

"Yes Professor?" Harry asked as he turned around.

"Mr. Malfoy was stunned in the hall this morning and missed his class." Dumbledore stopped and waited.

"Yes, Daphne and Blaise were just telling us about it. They're in that class with him." Harry said after waiting long enough to know that Dumbledore wasn't going to continue.

"And..." Dumbledore lead.

"And...Snape's pissed?" Harry asked pointing at the head table.

"No, well yes he is, but I was looking for an explanation." Dumbledore rolled his eyes.

"I think you've come to the wrong wizard then, sir." Harry stated carefully. "Might I ask what evidence you have to suggest that I perpetrated this crime?"

"I'm sorry but it is against school policy to talk about it until we know who the attacker is." Dumbledore said sadly.

"Oh, I see." Harry nodded. "That makes sense. I wish you luck, sir, in your investigation."

"Yes, thank you." Dumbledore said turning away with a frown.
"Enjoy your lunch."

"Um, Harry?" Hermione asked hesitantly as Dumbledore walked away.

"Yes Hermione?"

"Did you just dismiss the Headmaster, again?" Hermione seemed shocked, again.

"Yes, I might do that a lot." Harry nodded.

"That's going to take some getting used to." Hermione said. "That would never happen at my old school."

"That would never happen here either." George said. "We've tried everything we could think of to do just that."

"You really need to teach us how you do that." Fred added. "He just keeps talking."

"The trick is to do it right after you say something that has no response." Harry admitted. "I implied that I was innocent and said that I understood why his reasoning that we couldn't talk about the case anymore. If he had kept going after that it would have made him to be a liar or hypocrite. The fact that he didn't haul me off for questioning meant that he didn't have enough to do that with. So since we couldn't talk about that if he wanted more information he would have to transition to another topic, which he couldn't do after I ended the conversation."

"Well, when you say it like that..." Fred drawled.

"Makes us sound silly for not figuring that out." George complained.

"It's all about the timing guys." Harry replied. "You'll get there eventually, just keep practicing."

"What do you mean no response?" Hermione asked with a slight frown.

"Really?" Daphne raised an eyebrow then sighed. "Harry said that he agreed with the headmaster's line of reasoning and wasn't going to argue anymore. The only thing Dumbledore could have said was a confirmation, like he did, or he could insist that Harry wasn't done arguing somehow, or he could have refuted his own logic to give Harry something to work with."

"Honestly, he was probably trying to get Harry to try to insist that details that were secret really weren't and reveal something incriminating on accident. If Harry doesn't say anything at all he can't say anything wrong." Blaise added. "Not a very subtle bluff. Who does he think he's dealing with? Children?"

"Um, probably." Tonks sighed. "We are, after all, children still."

"Lies." Blaise insisted, and the Twins nodded in support.

"Come on Harry, Tonks." Hermione rolled her eyes as she stood up. "We've got Defense with the Gryffindors."

"Lucky." Hannah groaned. "We've got History."

"Quit your bellyaching." Daphne said sharply. "Blaise and I will be right there with you and you didn't have to deal with Snape already."

"Forge, I think we should brighten Snape's day." Gred said brightly.

"I was just thinking the same thing Brother." Forge smirked.

"Do we have anything in stock or will we have to get something ready before class?" Gred asked.

"We have that Soda Fountain." Forge suggested.

"That's still untested." Gred shook his head. "We don't know what it will do."

"Well, all science requires lab rats, or in this case lab bats." Forge replied. "And who better than Snape?"

"Fair enough!" Gred grinned. "I'm in."

"Like you ever weren't." Forge retorted.

"Shush." Gred glared.

"Have fun you two." Tonks laughed as she got up.

"Just don't maim anyone." Harry cautioned as he followed his girls.

HPCOC

What is Gilderoy Lockhart's favorite color? Obliviate doesn't have a color.

What is Gilderoy Lockhart's secret ambition? I forget.

What, in your opinion, is Gilderoy Lockhart's greatest achievement to date? I forget.

When is Gilderoy Lockhart's birthday and what would be his ideal gift? Sometime during the year, and an amazing story with no witnesses.

How many times has Gilderoy Lockhart won Witch Weekly's Most-Charming Smile Award? I'm going to say three, that smile is fairly charming.

"Very amusing Mr. Potter." Lockhart said looking up from the quiz with that infernal grin of his. "But I won the Most-Charming Smile Award five times."

Did he even notice the other answers? Harry thought frowning incredulously. "Erm, glad you liked it?"

"I must say, it looks like Ms. Granger got a perfect score!" Lockhart said beaming happily at the girl, who was currently avoiding looking at Harry.

"It's not my fault I have a really good memory." Hermione whispered out of the side of her mouth while staring at her hands. "And it was a test!"

"It's okay 'Mione." Harry shrugged. "I can't blame you for doing the assigned reading."

"You're not mad?" Hermione looked up at him?

"Why would he be mad?" Lockhart asked brightly.

"Oh! Um, no reason." Hermione said hurriedly and looked down again. Tonks laughed at the look of confusion on Lockhart's face.

"Right. So anyway." Lockhart shrugged and walked back up to his desk. "Today class I have brought in some fearsome creatures. Do not let their size fool you!" Lockhart picked a covered cage up from off the floor and tapped it with his wand, making what ever was inside move about violently. Several girls squeaked worriedly. "Don't worry. So long as I am around none of you will come to any harm."

"I'm sure." Harry muttered under his breath, and got shushed by Hermione.

"Behold! Cornish Pixies!" Lockhart shouted as he yanked the cover off the cage.

"Pixies?" Seamus laughed.

"Don't laugh, they're devilishly tricky things. Let's see if you can round them up!" Lockhart gleefully opened the cage.

"Lentesco Textus!" Harry shouted and brandished his wand and a geyser of spider webs shot out. Harry managed to catch all of the pixies while they were still swarming out of the cage, along with Lockhart, who didn't move fast enough.

"Well done Mr. Potter." Lockhart's muffled voice called. "Did he miss any?"

"No, sir!" Parvati called out.

"Very impressive. Five points to Ravenclaw!" Lockhart said causing the class to groan. "What?"

"I don't agree with the house point system. Therefore I am rejecting your reward." Harry informed the new professor. "Not that I don't appreciate the recognition mind you, it's just the wrong way."

"I understand. I think." Lockhart tried to shake his head but it was held firmly. "Do you think you could undo your spell now?"

"I'm afraid I don't know the counter charm." Harry admitted. "They should dissolve in an hour or two though."

"And unfortunately I can't move my hands to cast the spell myself." Lockhart said quickly.

"You could tell me and I could cast it." Harry suggested.

"The problem with that is that there is a very complicated wand movement." Lockhart stammered.

"Well, I do know one other way to get out." Harry said while the rest of the class snickered.

"What's that?" Lockhart asked relieved.

"I could set the whole thing on fire and burn them off." Harry said pensively. "Although I don't know how to protect you from the fire so you might get a little burnt, but you'd be free."

"No!" Lockhart shouted. "That's okay. No fire please. Um, actually, um, that's why I didn't try to tell you thee, um, incantation for the, er, counter spell. If you miscast it, um, could have set the web on fire. Yea that's it!"

"Well, you know best sir." Harry mocked.

"If you could just, stun the pixies long enough that I won't have to chase them down again once the web dissolves, I'll dismiss class." Lockhart begged.

"Stupefy." Harry waved his wand and all the pixies stopped struggling.

"Thank you." Lockhart said quietly. "Now everyone out!"

"So do you really not know the counter charm?" Draco whispered after they made it out the door. "Seems sloppy."

"All it takes is a regular finite but it isn't like I'm going to help him if he doesn't know it himself." Harry whispered back.

"Oh." Draco laughed. "And thanks for getting me out of Potions this morning."

"I can assure you that I had absolutely nothing to do with that." Harry smiled. "But you're welcome, least I could do."

Harry smiled as he watched Draco hurry to catch up with the other Gryffindors. One should be enough to keep Gryffindor complacent after the Twins leave, right? If Ron weren't so lazy he would make a good minion. Maybe Neville though.

"Wat'cha thinking about?" Tonks asked as she hooked an arm with one of hers.

"Oh, it's just nice to see that even with as bad of a start as he had, Draco can still find a place." Harry smiled at her, then Hermione when she took his other arm.

"Aww." Hermione coo'ed and leaned into him, smiling wistfully.

AN:

Two things have come up in reviews recently that I'd like to clear up.

First: Psychopaths are known to be compulsive liars and you claim that this Harry is a psychopath, yet he doesn't lie very often. Explain.

Lies are easy. Lies don't take much inspiration to come up with nor do they require any talent to tell, not to say there aren't levels of skill. Deceiving people by telling the truth, however, is fun, challenging and more fulfilling.

ALSO: Anyone telling me that he isn't evil or isn't a psychopath, wait until fifth year and then tell me he hasn't been the whole time. I can't tell you guys what he is planning because then there wouldn't be any suspense and what not. Especially since he is already behaving like a psychopath, and no that does NOT mean wanton chaos and destruction. I'm not going to reply to any more reviews on either of these issues.

Second: In chapter 1 Harry is already super-duper, why would he stick around for the abuse for the whole ten years? Plot hole?

Harry has the memories of the first time he spent the decade there, he also has a corresponding time frame where he was known to be living with the Dursleys in the universe. If he left immediately and then later wanted to show someone the memory of what they did to him when he was five he wouldn't be able to without spilling the beans. This way if he needs evidence of Dumbledore's misdeeds he still has usable data.

Not plot hole, just something I didn't realize people might not get.

Lentesco Textus = Sticky web

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